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DECEMBER 28, 1992 · $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

INTO AFRICA

"In choosing to intervene in Somalia and not in the Balkans, the U.S. has settled on the worst of both worlds—an isolationist-tending foreign policy where intervention is generally shunned, only to be chosen impulsively on criteria of military ease and sentiment."

—PATRICK GLYNN. Page 20

"We are in Somalia representing not democracy, but humanity. We are not bringing Jefferson to Somalia, we are bringing food.... The genocide of the recent past may seem like an occasion for moral or historical or philosophical speculation; but in its own time genocide is an occasion for *policy*."

—THE EDITORS. Page 7

Robert D. Kaplan: The African Quagmire

How Bush Made the Decision

e: The Serbian Homefront

evenson: Next Stop, Sudan?

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Our "Easy" Schools

A few weeks ago, I saw a TV interview with some Russian youngsters who now live in the U.S. After some standard questions, the interviewer asked them to compare their school experiences here with their experiences in Russia. Every one of these seventh and eighth graders had the same response: They'd already learned the material they were getting in our seventh and eighth grade classes when they were in third or fourth grade in Russia. They said that school in the U.S. was very easy.

There was nothing unusual about this exchange. Indeed, most people who have met foreign students from France or Germany or Japan have heard the same things. And if we question students like these a little further, we find that they are far ahead of their U.S. counterparts because they are assigned more work and more challenging work, and they work harder to get it all done. But why do they work harder? They have the same distractions as American kids. They have TV sets and pop culture.

One of the main reasons is that these other countries have national curriculums. They have decided what students need to know and be able to do by the time they graduate from secondary school. And they've worked back from these goals to figure out what children should learn by the time they are ages 14 and 9.

That's not true in the U.S. Our 50 state governments have developed curriculum materials, but they are very broadly defined. So each school or teacher can select from this broad array and develop what amounts to an individual curriculum.

This makes for plenty of variety but very little continuity. As a result, students who move from one school—or even one class—to another often find they are out of sync because they have not studied the math or history on which the coming year's work will be based. In countries where there is a national curriculum, fewer students are lost—and fewer teachers are lost because they know what the students who walk into their classroom have already studied.

A national curriculum gives everyone involved—students, parents and teachers—a different perspective on schoolwork. In the U.S., when a teacher piles on the work, students are likely to object. They say it's too hard and too much, and they complain that other teachers or other schools don't expect that kind of work. Often parents support these objections. So there is a process of negotiation about schoolwork in which students, and frequently parents, play a big role.

Why do students from France or Germany work harder than our kids? They have the same distractions as American students. They have TV sets and pop culture.

Sometimes teachers don't ask enough of students. They feel sorry for some youngsters because of their socioeconomic or racial or ethnic background and decide they won't be able to do real work. So they teach a watered-down curriculum and shortchange youngsters who could learn if they were given a chance.

In our system, how much work students do in a given class is up for grabs. Sometimes it's determined by the willingness or resistance of students and parents. Sometimes it's based on the teacher's expectations. In any case, the level and amount of work common in countries with national curriculums is practically never reached here. The choices our system allows inevitably lead to softer standards and less work just as the mandates in other countries lead to more work and much higher levels of achievement. If a student or a parent in one of these countries does complain, the teacher says, "All the other third- grade youngsters are doing this work, and you can, too." And the teacher probably reminds the parents and child that falling behind now can lead to serious consequences later—like not passing an important exam.

Learning to write well or be competent in math is a lot like preparing for the Olympics. Youngsters have to work hard and do more than they think they can. This can be unpleasant and even border on the painful, but it takes this kind of stretching to achieve high levels in any field. In the U.S., a teacher who pushes students to work hard is viewed as unreasonable or even mean. But where there are external standards, a teacher is more like a coach—someone who is helping prepare kids for the Olympics—than like someone who has odd, personal ideas about education.

With a national curriculum, everybody knows what is required. If there also are clear and visible stakes—getting into university or an apprenticeship program—the pressure is on to make sure youngsters meet the standards. Without national standards and a national curriculum there are no such pressures. That's why students in other countries work hard and do so well—and why students in our "easy" and undemanding schools do not. Knowing that should lead us to act.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1992 by Albert Shanker.

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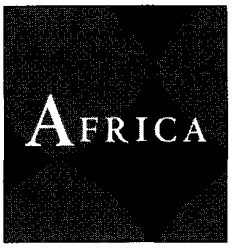

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CORRESPONDENCE

Life of the party

To the editors:
Nat Hentoff, after condemning his liberal colleagues for being deaf to rational pro-life arguments, presents the most distorted selection of pro-choice arguments I have ever seen ("Pro-Choice Bigots," November 30). To pick only one: "Pro-choice women are so unyielding because they profoundly believe that without the power to abort at will, they will be enslaved."

Let us take a step away from political rhetoric and into the world of reality. A young woman confronting this agonizing choice is surely not exalting in her "power to abort at will." She is, perhaps, deeply regretting her and her partner's carelessness, examining her current situation in life, thinking through reasonable alternatives, coming to terms with what she hopes ultimately will be the best choice for all concerned. She may decide to have the child, she may decide otherwise. But one thing is certain—she is as far removed from Hentoff's careless, political aphorisms as one could possibly be.

As a fervent believer in the pro-choice position, I do not disdain anyone for believing otherwise. I simply think that the pro-life proponents are holding fast to a principle that ignores the realities of the world we live in. In a perfect world, where people are not confronted by sometimes debilitating economic and social pressures, where children (and adults) are better educated, where everyone has access to viable alternatives, perhaps we would all choose to be pro-life. But that pro-life position would not be a political mandate—it would remain, always, a personal choice.

NICOLE COLWELL
New York, New York

To the editors:
There is bad faith somewhere in Nat Hentoff's description of having his "pro-life" views censored by the left. He believes that abortion is "another form of execution." But if he truly believes this, then his reaction is shockingly tame. He describes himself as being "dismayed at the annual killing of 1.6 million developing human beings." Surely dismay is hardly an adequate response to what he must assume is legalized mass murder. Nor is tolerance. Hentoff describes his wife as "fiercely pro-choice." Does that mean she is a fierce proponent of murder on a vast scale? Presumably it does. Good libertarian that he professes to be, Hentoff seems to affirm, even celebrate, his wife's disagreement. But this is to reduce his view, and his wife's, to abstract "positions" assumed by professional intellectuals accustomed to participating in panel discussions. In short, something has to give: either Hentoff has to treat abortion seriously, as the bloody issue that he claims it to be, or be willing at some point to compromise his tolerance of dissenting views.

DAVID ROOCHNIK
Williamstown, Massachusetts

To the editors:
The views of Nat Hentoff sadden me. I am sure he is a good man who has come to a difficult stand on an emotional issue. It just makes it worse. The pro-life movement is the proverbial cart before the horse. A true cure for children would result in a pro-child movement, with staged sit-ins against poverty and protests against family abuse of children. I know I speak for many of us when I say that I wish my mother had chosen not to have me. A life of abuse can never be equaled out on a mythic score sheet. The horror returns throughout your life. (Remember that many abused children grow up to be sociopaths.) It is far better to die in the womb than to be a POW in what is supposed to be your home. I suggest every pro-lifer conduct an open-minded search into how some of us live.

[NAME WITHHELD]
Manchester, Connecticut

To the editors:
How encouraging and refreshing to see Nat Hentoff's "Pro-Choice Bigots" in your magazine. Many of us left-wing abortion opponents have been frustrated by such unrelenting prejudice for years. Pro-life women especially are automatically assumed to be bouffant-hairdoed, polyester-wearing, Bible-thumping harpies who martyr themselves at home with the kiddies.

Numerous pro-life women like myself see nothing of our own lives in this stereotype. I am a proud Bryn Mawr alumna and a member of an authentically egalitarian co-parenting dual-career couple. I have taught a women's studies class, published in a feminist spirituality journal, and given sex education talks to teen mothers. I have raged publicly at right-wing anti-abortionists who hypocritically refused to help when I gave birth to my unplanned daughter under horrendously difficult circumstances. I am now a social worker who assists impoverished Hispanic and African-American mothers. I have also worked on an AIDS project, marched against the Persian Gulf war, and spoken out against the death penalty.

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But when women like me connect abortion to other forms of violence and oppression, suddenly we become traitors to our gender and pawns of Jesse Helms. When pro-choice leftists get away with dismissing us like this, they conveniently avoid our *real* reasons for opposing abortion: our belief that it's wrong to "solve" social problems through violence, including the dismemberment of unborn children and surgical rape of women. No ulterior motives here.

MARY KRANE DERR
Chicago, Illinois

News of Perot

To the editors:

Ross Perot's remarkable showing cannot be dismissed as simply as TNR did in listing it under the Notebook heading as "News of the Weird" (November 23). For all the problems presented by Perot the man, Perot the candidate seemed to be alone in echoing a number of articles I have seen in TNR on the deficit, on taxing middle-class entitlement benefits, and on the fuel tax. Bill Clinton, by contrast, presents only the hope that he will seriously address the deficit despite his avoidance of the topic during the campaign.

A number of Perot's votes were clearly protest votes. I know of people who hoped Clinton would clearly win before California's polls closed in the hope that they could safely cast protest votes for Perot, along with others who decided to take that chance anyway. Perot's 19 percent of the vote was, at one level, proof that there is definitely a mandate for change, and equally proof that this mandate is certainly not personal to Clinton.

ROY F. MALAHOWSKI
Bakersfield, California

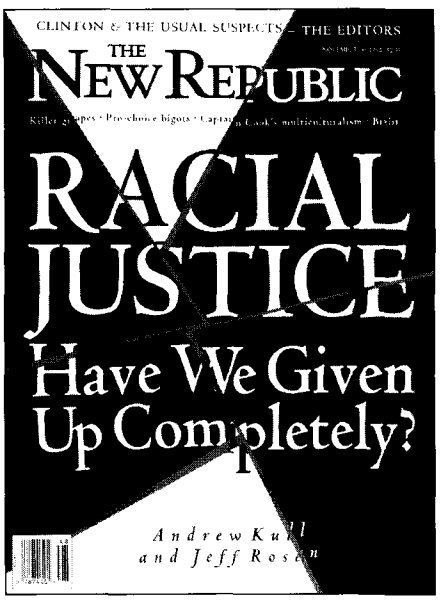
Asylum

To the editors:

Jeff Rosen's "Sweet Mystery" (Washington Diarist, November 9) asserts that Justice Antonin Scalia's opinion in *INS* v. *Elias-Zacarias* "suggested that the Immigration Act would not even have protected the Holocaust refugees who were turned away at New York harbor and sent back to Germany." This inflammatory charge is completely off the mark.

A central issue in *Elias-Zacarias* was whether the Immigration Act's language regarding "persecution on account of . . . political opinion" refers to the victim's political opinion, not the persecutor's. In concluding that the language refers to the victim's political opinion, Scalia made the narrow, simple observation that the Nazi persecution of Jews was not, within the ordinary meaning of language, persecution on account of political opinion. His clear recognition (which one would have thought too obvious to require elaboration) was that the Nazi persecution of Jews was instead based on religion or ethnicity. Like victims of persecution on account of political opinion, victims of religious persecution are entitled to asylum status under the Immigration Act. Because, under Scalia's construction of the act, those fleeing the Holocaust had been persecuted on account of religion or ethnicity, they would have been protected by the act. Thus, Rosen's point about Scalia is ridiculous.

M. MILLER BAKER
Springfield, Virginia


CLINTON & THE USUAL SUSPECTS – THE EDITORS
THE NEW REPUBLIC
RACIAL JUSTICE
Have We Given Up Completely?
Andrew Kull and Jeff Rosen

Spondees hammering

To the editors:

I may be taken for a pointy-headed grouch, but I thought Mark O'Donnell's poem "Brain, Heart, and Hand" (November 16) was cloying and poorly executed. In this corporeal trialogue, the first loser is the audience's brain, which must bear with O'Donnell's archaisms ("I've no such magic art") and Hallmark imagery ("retrieve the blowing sand").

The second loser is the audience's ear, repeatedly hammered by the spondees ("Brain calling Hand"), to be cozily uplifted by the iambs ("Release at my command"). As one poet has quipped about this school of poetry, "At least the meters run on time." The formalism is strictly pro forma.

I would not be dispirited if I felt that O'Donnell's poem was the exception to the rule. But it is not: TNR has been carrying more and more of these "conceit" poems, some better crafted than others—David Lehman's work, for example—but all defensively engaged with the forms inherited from the past.

Ezra Pound once said that poetry is news that stays news. In TNR it's the news that has a longer shelf life, and the poetry that turns sepia-toned in a blink.

SCOTT SAUL
Washington, D.C.

My Son Fred

To the editors:

So Fred Barnes can't seem to recall many anti-Communist movies out of Hollywood ("O.K., You Win," Washington Diarist, November 30). Is he serious in claiming that Hollywood has been "chiefly devoted to attacking anti-communism"? The fact is that throughout the late 1940s and '50s, the movies jumped onto the anti-Communist bandwagon with both feet. Sure, most of it was dour, forgettable pap, and granted, Barnes is not much of a moviegoer, but has he really forgotten an entire anti-Commie growth industry, notable for such classics of pop propaganda as *I Married a Communist, I Was a Communist for the FBI, Red Menace, My Son John, The Iron Curtain, Walk East on Beacon, I Led Three Lives?, The Manchurian Candidate, Prisoner of War* with Ronald Reagan, *A Yank in Vietnam,* to name but a handful? The list goes on and on, and is easily as long as Barnes's list, if not longer. Anti-communism was a major profit center for Hollywood in the '50s, and the diabolical red slavemasters were right up there with UFOs as the ultimate postwar incarnation of Saturday night national threat.

MARK SCHAFFER
Rockville, Maryland

Cooked

To the editors:

Concerning James Hamilton-Paterson's review of two books on Captain Cook ("The Voyage Out," November 30): A moment's reflection should reveal why Captain Cook "went ballistic" over the theft of tools and equipment from his ship. These items were in many cases essential to its safe operation and navigation, and thus to the survival of Cook and his men. Having the sextant stolen from an eighteenth-century ship thousands of miles from home (this happened to Cook once; he recovered it) is not comparable to having one's wallet lifted by a subway pickpocket or losing one's watch to a mugger.

JOHN CUSHING
Washington, D.C.

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FROM WASHINGTON

Gatecrashers

A new Census Bureau report predicts that there will be 383 million Americans in the year 2050. That's 128 million more than there are now, and 83 million more than the bureau was predicting just four years ago, when it appeared that the U.S. population would peak and stabilize at around 300 million.

Part of the startling upward revision reflects an unexpected increase in the birthrate. But most of it is due to an increase in immigration. The Census Bureau expects an average of 880,000 new arrivals a year, legal and illegal. By 2050 a fifth of the American population will be folks who arrived here after 1991 and their children. Almost half the population (47 percent) will be "minority"—black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American—compared with just a quarter today.

Immigration has not been much of a political issue lately. In fact a 1990 law increasing the annual legal quota by 40 percent passed almost unnoticed. And there's been little fuss over the total failure of the hotly contested 1986 immigration reform—which for the first time made it a crime to employ illegal aliens—to achieve its purpose of reducing illegal immigration.

But the politics of immigration may be heating up. And the political coloration of anti-immigrant sentiment may be changing too. Despite the traditional association of the Democratic Party with immigrant groups, what little opposition there has been to immigration in recent years has come vaguely from the left. Some environmentalists believe that immigrants contribute to overpopulation and strain the nation's natural resources. And some blacks (and white sympathizers) worry that immigrants are stealing opportunities from America's oldest and still most downtrodden minority.

What's new, though, is the re-emergence of anti-immigrant sentiment on the right. Here it takes the traditional form of concern about the nation's ethnic character. This fits in with other social concerns about matters like multiculturalism and even gay rights: a sense that some classic and comfortable image of America is being changed before our eyes.

Presidential candidate Pat Buchanan sometimes included immigration in his riffs on this general theme. And the *National Review* (edited by an immigrant—although only from Britain) ran a long cover story (by another immigrant from Britain) condemning immigration as a liberal elitist plot and predicting an America of "ethnic strife ... dual loyalties ... collapsing like the Tower of Babel" if the foreign hordes aren't kept out. ("Tired? Poor? Huddled? Tempest-Tossed?" asked the witty cover. "Try Australia.") Free market capitalism itself, the author suggests at one point, may depend on the continued predominance of Anglo-Saxon stock.

There have been Americans who feared that our country is "running out of room" since the frontier closed off more than a century ago. Although 128 million extra people in the next six decades sounds like an awful lot, that is no greater than the population increase over the past six decades. (And it's a much smaller proportional increase.) Only environmentalist zealots could believe that America would be better off if our population were still only 125 million—even accepting the complacent assumption that everyone reading this column would be one of the lucky 125 million.

There is no answer to the argument that "at some point" the country becomes too crowded, but there's no particular reason to believe we're at that point yet. Germany, with less than a third of America's population in a far smaller area, is currently accepting new arrivals in almost the same volume.

Germany may not seem the happiest example for my side of the immigration argument. There, immigration is straining the social fabric and producing riots and violence by neo-Nazi punks. Not to defend such xenophobic outrages, but Germany is different from the United States. Like most countries in the world (Israel, to pick a sensitive example), its sense of nationhood has a large ethnic component. This is neither good nor evil; it's just a fact. Although any civilized nation should be prepared to take in refugees from oppression, the "otherness" of foreigners will always be more vivid elsewhere than in America. In other countries, concern about diluting the nation's ethnic stock even has a certain validity.

Such concerns have no validity in America. In fact, they are un-American. If applied in earlier times, when they were raised with equal passion, they would have excluded the ancestors of many who make the ethnic/cultural preservation argument today. The anti-immigration literature seems to regard this point as some kind of cheap shot. But I cannot see why.

On the economic effects of immigration, there are studies to suit every taste. Immigrants take jobs from poor Americans; or they go on welfare and bloat the tax bill; or both; or neither. Basic economic logic suggests that even when a new arrival "takes" a job, the money he earns and spends will in turn create a job or so. The more the merrier is a tenet of capitalism dating back to Adam Smith, and nothing I've seen disproves it.

The propaganda from FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform, the liberal anti-immigration lobby) on these issues is unpersuasive because it tends to "prove too much," as the lawyers say. With a straight face, FAIR compares immigration to slavery and child labor, as if the trouble with these practices were the burden they placed on rival sources of labor. In one recent broadside FAIR's executive director, Dan Stein, suggests that America should have curtailed immigration after the Civil War in order to increase economic opportunities for ex-slaves. Whether this would actually have benefited blacks or not, it might have spared us Dan Stein.

The emerging case for curtailing immigration has many byways. There's the argument that we need "time to digest" the immigrant wave of the past couple of decades, just as previous waves were followed by periods of low immigration. There's the argument that today's ethnic assertiveness and social welfare apparatus mean that the machinery of assimilation no longer works to turn immigrants into middle-class Americans. There's the undeniable fact that instant communication and cheap transportation have eroded the natural restraints of distance and ignorance on the demand for places in America.

There are counterarguments to all these points, and others. And counter-counterarguments. No one can know the effect of future large-scale immigration on our country. It has always been beneficial in the past, but that's no guarantee it will be so in the future. The previous tenant of this column, the late Richard Strout, believed passionately that America's achievement of a liberal welfare state depended on levels of both affluence and social cohesion that were threatened by large-scale immigration.

Immigration is a subject, I suspect, on which very few opinions are changed because of arguments or statistics. It's almost a matter of faith. Your views on immigration depend on your sense of what makes America America. For some it's endless open spaces. For some it's a demographic image frozen in time. For some that stuff on the Statue of Liberty still plucks a chord. All these visions of America have a large component of fantasy. But I know which fantasy I prefer.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 28, 1992

INTO AFRICA

One of the most inflammatory debates of the last decade, a decade in which the United States often resorted to the use of force in its conduct of foreign policy, concerned the relation of strategic interests to moral values. Those who disapproved of American military interventions abroad deployed moral and strategic arguments, sometimes in tandem, sometimes alone. Those who supported them worked hard to find a happy overlap between the strategic and the moral, and there were some interventionists for whom the appeal to interests sufficed. But it is hard to recall a recent American intervention that was justified *solely* on moral grounds. Therein lies the genuine interest, and the genuine urgency, of the American intervention in Somalia. It is not, in any significant way, an affair of realism; and so it puts the question of idealism in foreign policy rather purely. Are there times and places in which moral considerations alone warrant the resort to American force? Are the Marines a right response to evil?

We believe that the answer is a firm and slightly complicated yes. The complications are obvious: the costs of responding to evil may themselves come to seem evil, it is not America's job to mend the world, the moral grounds of our action must be plain and persuasive to the American public, and so on. And yet, if it is not our job to mend the world, neither is it our job to sit back idly before the spectacle of its worst suffering.

It is true that an idealist foreign policy will always seem inconsistent, or even hypocritical. If Somalia, then why not Liberia? And if Liberia, then why not Bosnia? Evil, after all, is a ubiquitous and multicultural thing. But it would be perverse if an exquisite sense of the pervasiveness of evil became a lofty excuse, a tragic-minded alibi, for inaction or even isolationism. The argument that we must not intervene in Somalia unless we also intervene in Liberia amounts to something like this: we'd love to save your life, but if we saved your life, we'd have to save everybody's life, and so we're going to have to let you die.

The very nature of moral action is that it does *not* save everybody's life, that it does not mend the world, except partially, locally, temporarily. (The attempt to mend it completely and forever is known as totalitarianism.) It is important, therefore, to understand that a moral objective, for all its grandeur, may be quite limited. Idealists are not always idiots.

Thus we need not delude ourselves, as we go into Africa, about the character of the place. We are intruding into a political culture that is essentially tribal and feudal, in which ancient prejudices and raw relations of power will matter more than notions of fairness or the-

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ories of justice. The lives that we save in Somalia will continue to be lived in a brutal environment. We are not bringing Jefferson to Somalia, we are bringing food. We are not expressing our democracy, we are expressing our humanity. To be sure, our presence in Somalia will have an effect upon the political realities of the place, but the rearrangement of Somalia—except insofar as it involves the disarming of the brigands who stand in the way of the famine's relief—must not be our objective. We are not reforming, we are rescuing. And rescue, again, is almost always temporary. (The American action is called Operation Restore Hope, but pessimism about human nature is a much more compelling reason for decency than optimism.)

Intervening on moral grounds, in other words, need not be the sloppy, open-ended, woolly-minded, emotionally swelling exercise that its critics fear. A purely moral mission may be precisely and narrowly defined. Practical distinctions may be made. There is a difference, for example, between genocide and civil war. If a people wish to find a solution to some of their most painful contradictions by tearing themselves apart in a civil war, well, the sons and the daughters of Abraham Lincoln are in no position to cast a stone. In such civil wars, moreover, innocent people will die.

But famine and concentration camps are surely a different matter. (Famines are almost never natural disasters, almost always purposeful crimes.) Or so at least they had better be, for those who pretend to honor the lessons of the middle of this century. The genocide of the recent past may seem like an occasion for moral or historical or philosophical speculation; but in its own time genocide is an occasion for *policy*.

As is customary in debates about American military intervention, the ironies abound. It is a little annoying and a little amusing to watch Jesse Jackson discover a military adventure of which he approves. There are those on the left who oppose the intervention because it looks like imperialism and those on the right who support it because it looks like imperialism. (In *National Review* last week, Paul Johnson was having Kitchener fantasies. Didn't he see the movie?) But the biggest and the most disturbing irony of all may be found in the Pentagon, in the grounds of its own enthusiasm for Operation Restore Hope.

The enthusiasm of the eternally cautious Colin Powell for military action in Somalia appears to be owed significantly to the sense that it will be easy. He may be right, but he is confirming us in our own uneasy feeling that the Gulf war left the American military with some exceedingly odd standards for the use of American force. In brief, the Gulf war appears not to have ended the anxiety known as "post-Vietnam syndrome" but to have codified it. For if the standard for military intervention is that it be easy, that we enjoy overwhelming force in a featureless landscape with a monopoly of the air, then we are still paralyzed by the prospect of a fight. Operation Desert Storm may have been a war, but it was not exactly a battle. It was spectacularly untypical (like the featureless, ungoverned, starving landscape of Somalia) of the conflicts that will broach the prospect of using our troops. It seems safe to predict that most of those conflicts will fall somewhere between the tangle of the Indochinese jungle and the turkey shoot of the Arabian desert.

Like Bosnia. It seems perfectly clear, at least to us, that the grounds for acting against politically induced famine and the grounds for acting against concentration camps are the same. The Serbian crimes against humanity, however, are occurring in a denser and more difficult strategic situation. The effort to stop them would be militarily more difficult, and it may result in American casualties. And so the Serbian army in Bosnia is now described in the same ridiculously inflated terms as the Republican Guards in Kuwait were once described—and by the same proud people, in and out of uniform, who never tire of insisting that the United States is the most powerful nation, the only superpower, on earth. Is the attrition of the Serbian forces from the air and from the sea, with the intention of drastically raising the costs of maintaining the concentration camps, and with the clear and limited objective of desisting when the United Nations or the Red Cross certifies that the concentration camps have been opened and destroyed, really beyond our means? And if the Bosnian agony is militarily harder than the Somalian agony, it is politically easier. The political culture of Central and Eastern Europe countenances a disgraceful degree of savagery, but it is not only savage. An intervention against Milosevic's genocide would have the support of a significant number of Serbs, who are moved by conscience and by the liberal values of the (better parts of) the West. In Serbia, unlike in Somalia, rescue may be the spur of reform.

A just war is a war in which one is not only prepared to kill, but also to die. The justice of a military action says nothing about its costs. Like most Americans, we have no appetite for American casualties, but we are a little worried about officers and policy-makers who have no stomach for them either. And to pretend to the American people that military action in the name of our principles will be mostly clean and cost-free is to set them up for a colossal disillusionment (and to set the American military up for still another wave of popular revulsion).

Idealism in the foreign policy of a democracy makes special demands of its leaders. They must clearly define, honestly explain, eloquently persuade. They must seem not only strategically, but also ethically authoritative. We do not expect anything in the way of analytic power or moral suasion from George Bush. (Suasion is, by contrast, Bill Clinton's hobby; and when he inherits Operation Restore Hope, his extraordinary skills in this regard will be put to the test.) Still, the feebleness of George Bush does not detract from the essential rightness of his endeavor. Yet another faraway people may remember him gratefully, even if his own people may be glad to see him go. •

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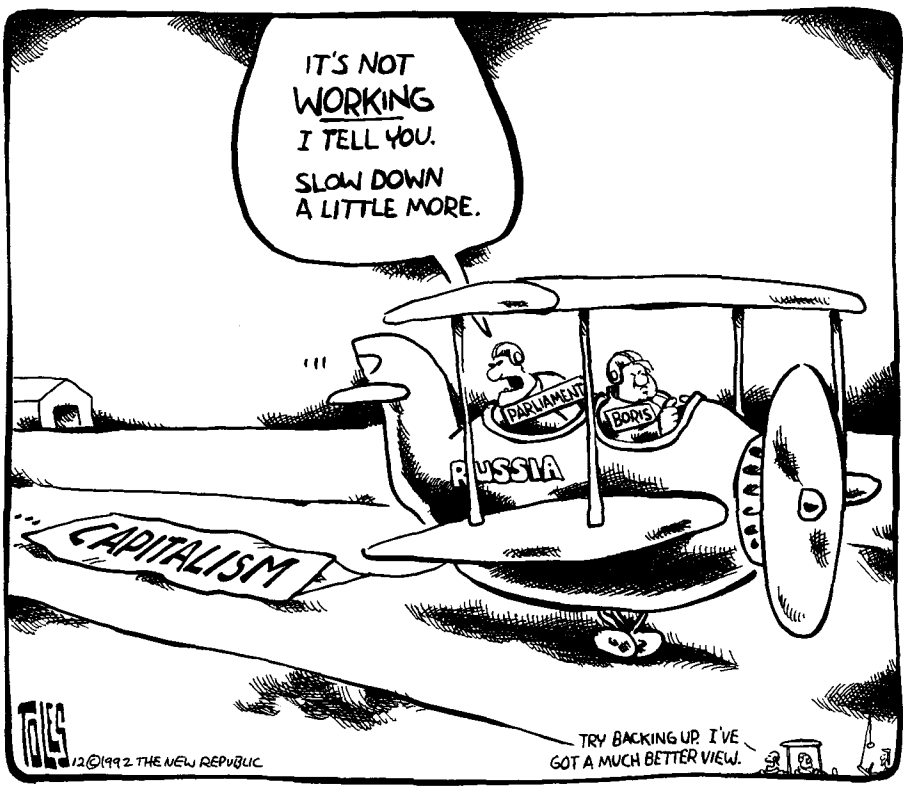
NOTEBOOK

TOKENISM REDUX: Recent leaks from Little Rock bear a depressing message: a slew of administration appointments will be made primarily with the candidate's race, gender, or sexual orientation in mind. The attorney general, for example, is allegedly *guaranteed* to be a woman, a decision reached, according to *The New York Times*, after a bevy of women's groups, with the support of Hillary Clinton, lobbied for such a move. An earlier leak gave the names of several women who were apparently destined for high positions, and was supposed to allay suspicions that appointments were going to be filled by "white men." We hope Clinton appoints many women to his administration as well as people from every minority group. But the entire spirit in which these appointments are made defeats their purpose. Rigging certain departments for a single gender or race, tracking down an individual not for her intrinsic talent but for her ethnic makeup, is an insult to minorities and a depressing sign of the cultural balkanization of our politics. It is the old Democratic Party speaking, not the new.



LLOYD I: Soon-to-be Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen's longtime advocacy of the oil and gas industries is fairly well known. But few people remember him as an early supporter of the nuclear power industry as well. During the Korean War, Bentsen, then a young representative, said, "I propose that the president of the United States advise the commander of the North Korean troops to withdraw his forces beyond the thirty-eighth parallel within one week—or use that week to evacuate civilians from a specified list of North Korean cities that will be subjected to atomic attack by the United States Air Force." Well, at least Clinton isn't naming him secretary of state.

LLOYD II: But he *is* making him treasury secretary. It's hard to feel elated about the prospect of a longtime, outspoken advocate of business and special-interest loopholes in the most senior economic position in the Cabinet. But if you think about it, the appointment may have been a pretty shrewd move. After all, with Bentsen in the Cabinet, the Senate Finance Committee will no longer be chaired by a loyal supporter of various corporate interests. And by moving Bentsen out of the Senate and into the executive branch, Clinton actually gains leverage over him. If, as treasury secretary, Bentsen insists on larding up the president's tax program with special-interest loopholes and budget-busting tax breaks, Clinton can order him to stop or fire him. With Bentsen in the Senate, Clinton can only cajole or persuade. The superficial view is that the president-elect just gave in to Bentsen. The more cynical, but in this case optimistic, one is that the truth is the other way round.

MICKEY MOUSE: This week's Hollywood Hypocrisy award goes not to the actors, directors, and producers who are happy to boycott any place on earth where they don't have vacation homes, but to Michael D. Eisner, the chairman of Walt Disney. Eisner was a strong backer of Bill Clinton for president, and an enthusiastic supporter of his economic agenda. But as soon as Clinton was elected, he cashed in his stock options, and sold out for a cool $125 million. The reason? Officially, it's that Clinton has proposed limiting the deductibility of executive pay, which would mean it would cost Disney more money if Eisner cashed out later. But there's also a personal interest, of course. Clinton has proposed a tax increase for people who earn more than $200,000, and an additional surtax on millionaires. Maybe Eisner supports the new taxes but just doesn't want to pay them himself.

CASH DWAYNE: Dwayne Andreas, the chairman of the agribusiness concern Archer Daniels Midland, is well known for his largess toward politicians. As the manufacturer of ethanol, a corn-based fuel for which there is no market without government regulation, he has long operated on the assumption that massive campaign con-

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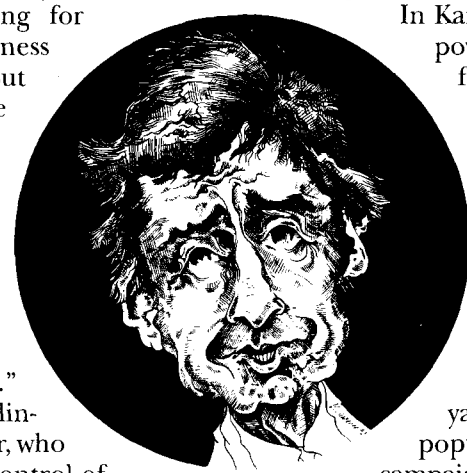
tributions and other financial favors are the way to sell his stuff. He's done pretty well so far. After giving more than $1 million to the Republicans in 1991, President Bush ruled favorably on a provision of the Clean Air Act that affects his company. But politics is politics. Four days before the election, Andreas bailed on the Republicans and gave $90,000 to the Democratic National Committee. Just a little housewarming present. •

THE HIT LIST

FOB STORY

By Mickey Kaus

On October 26, on NBC's "Meet the Press," Al Hunt of *The Wall Street Journal* asked Clinton campaign chairman Mickey Kantor if it was true that he'd attended private briefings for clients and prospective clients of his law firm, Manatt, Phelps, Phillips & Kantor. "Well, I have given briefings all over the country ... one of which was in my law office," responded Kantor. This was a genuine scandal—Clinton was supposed to "clean up Washington," yet here was his campaign chairman trolling for potentially lucrative lobbying business even before the campaign was over. But the press (conspiracy theorists, take note) didn't pick up on Kantor's admission until the day after the election. On November 5 the *Journal*'s Jill Abramson pointed out that, in addition to the private briefing, Kantor's firm had thrown a party at a Washington club that, as Abramson put it, served "to further flaunt Mr. Kantor's role in the Clinton campaign."



The story came too late to hurt Clinton, but not too late to damage Kantor, who at the time was attempting to grab control of the Clinton "transition." Kantor had been relegated to transition-planning while others (Stephanopoulos, et al.) ran the actual campaign. Now, like many a nominal transition chief, Kantor discovered that the people who had been successfully running the campaign also wanted to run the government. When Kantor began moving into his new offices, his enemies cut him down, using the argument that appointing such an obvious influence-peddler to head up the transition would send "the wrong signal." Kantor was given a face-saving job implementing his idea for an economic "summit," which was quickly marked down to a "retreat."

Why worry, then, about a Kantor comeback? The transition's most obvious loser, he seems to have alienated almost everyone who matters in the Clinton inner circle. Unfortunately, there are two possible exceptions, and they're both named Clinton. Kantor met Hillary while serving on the board of the Legal Services Corporation during the Carter years. Full FOB-hood followed, and the president-elect is not known as a man who humiliates his friends. At some point, a wave of pro-Kantor sentiment may develop—indeed, it's already developing. After all, didn't Kantor give up his law practice for a year to chair the campaign? Wasn't he a calming presence when Clinton was losing the New Hampshire primary? Wasn't he victimized by his law partner, Charles Manatt, the former DNC chairman who couldn't wait to advertise his firm's connections? Is what he does for a living really any more corrupt than what Vernon Jordan and Warren Christopher do for a living? Clinton will have to find *something* for his old friend to do.

Let's hope it's nothing very important. The main trouble with Mickey Kantor isn't that he's an especially sleazy lawyer-lobbyist. It's that he's a typically sleazy lawyer-lobbyist. His "administrative law practice" consists largely of lobbying politicians for whom he raises funds (largely from the rich) and makes connections. Kantor just has more connections than most, having previously run state or national campaigns for Jerry Brown, Walter Mondale, and the ethically challenged California Senator Alan Cranston. Kantor is also representative of a peculiarly Democratic strain of influence peddling, dating back at least to Abe Fortas, in which a few good works serve to justify a multitude of lucrative not-so-good works. In Kantor's case, his early career as an anti-poverty lawyer (representing migrant farm workers) and a few ongoing civic causes (e.g., promoting CCC-style work projects for youth) give an idealistic gloss to expensive string-pulling on behalf of Northrop, NEC, Occidental Petroleum, and Philip Morris.

Kantor's 1988 work for Occidental was something of a paradigmatic effort. Occidental chairman Armand Hammer wanted to drill for oil under the Pacific Palisades, a few yards from some of Los Angeles's most popular beaches. Mayor Tom Bradley had campaigned on a platform of opposition to the Oxy drilling, but after his election Kantor's firm managed to get him to change his mind. When angry residents put an initiative on the ballot to stop the project, Kantor organized a phony Oxy-funded group, the "Los Angeles Public and Coastal Protection Committee," that put a second, confusing initiative on the ballot—one that contained anti-drilling language but would allow Hammer's project to proceed. On the committee's letterhead, Kantor listed himself only as chairman of the California Conservation Corps (those idealistic credentials come in handy!). During the ensuing campaign, Kantor appealed assiduously to class and race resentments, arguing that Hammer's project was only

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controversial because it was in a rich part of town, comparing drilling opponents to those angered by a gang killing in affluent Westwood when "there are gang killings all the time in South-Central."

Despite Kantor's ingenuity, Hammer's bid was defeated. This raises a second relevant point about Kantor. Despite his billing as an "expert political strategist" (*Los Angeles Times*), the record of his political judgments is not confidence-inspiring. In 1984 Walter Mondale conferred with Kantor (his California campaign director) and confidently predicted he would beat Gary Hart in that state's presidential primary. Hart won big. That same year Kantor promoted egomaniacal loose-cannon Lee Iacocca as Mondale's running mate. In 1982 Kantor embarrassed his candidate, then-Governor Jerry Brown, when (as the *Sacramento Bee* reported) he pushed a bill for an oil company client while chairing Brown's Senate campaign.

The clumsy, doomed quality of Kantor's 1992 postelection putsch itself demonstrates a certain lack of political awareness. And Kantor's most significant contribution to the transition, the economic "retreat," is a truly dumb idea, threatening to waste Clinton's energy (and his share of the national attention span) in a day-long schmooze with a hundred corporate gasbags. As if Clinton hadn't run as the man who already *had* the answers (and didn't need a gigantic conference to think them up)—as if economic policy, like Kantor's "law" practice, were somehow a question of making enough connections.

Kantor can be charming and helpful, as many of his colleagues attest (and as I can confirm from my one brief encounter with him). And it's true that he hasn't done anything that other Democratic power lawyers haven't done. It's a bit unfair, then, that he—and not, say, Ron Brown—should be singled out as representing, in the Clinton administration, the corruption at the heart of the Abe Fortas/Clark Clifford model of lawyerly involvement in government and politics. But that's what he represents, and it is a tradition his friend the president-elect desperately needs to bury. If Kantor asks for a job, no doubt he will get one. But maybe he won't ask. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

LAST CALL

By Fred Barnes

Contrary to popular belief, President Bush's decision to dispatch American ground troops to Somalia was not driven primarily by his watching scenes of starving children on T.V. Nor was it prompted by a sudden reversal of a Pentagon stand against deploying a U.S.-led force. The Defense Department didn't have a position to reverse. During discussions of the catastrophe in Somalia, it was noncommittal, rather than opposed to deployment. The thing that caught Bush's attention was an alarming letter on November 24 from Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the United Nations secretary general, to the members of the U.N. Security Council. Bush got a copy of the letter that morning. Once he'd read it, the troops were as good as on their way. And the Bush Doctrine was born.

Boutros-Ghali has credibility with Bush. He'd visited the White House last May 12, following a swing around the world. "I'm really worried about Somalia," he told Bush then. Muslim leaders, he added, had complained to him that the world unites against Muslim bullies like Saddam Hussein but never acts when Muslims are victims, as in Bosnia or Somalia. Now, in his letter, Boutros-Ghali said civilization had collapsed in Somalia. "Somali 'authorities' ... compete for anything of value in the country," he wrote. "Armed threats and killings often decide the outcome. Looting and banditry are rife.... In essence, humanitarian supplies have become the basis of an otherwise nonexistent Somali economy." The result: delivery of food aid "has become exceedingly difficult, resulting in large-scale starvation."

Four more U.N. battalions were needed, Boutros-Ghali argued. (Five hundred Pakistani troops were already in Somalia, holed up in a corner of Mogadishu.) Bush and Brent Scowcroft, his national security adviser, discussed this option. Given the dire situation, it seemed inadequate. Later that day a stronger option was broached in a paper sent to Bush by the "deputies committee," the group of sub-Cabinet officials from the Defense and State Departments, the CIA, and the National Security Council that meets almost daily during a crisis. The deputies offered three options without recommendation. The first was to continue sending aid and hope it gets through to the starving. The second was roughly what Boutros-Ghali was advocating, only with the United States organizing the beefed-up U.N. force but not contributing any American ground troops. The third option was the strong one: a U.S.-led, multinational ground force, composed largely of American troops, would seize key parts of Somalia and make sure food aid got to hungry Somalis. Bush was drawn to this option.

A full-fledged meeting of the NSC was scheduled for the next morning, November 25, the day before Thanksgiving. (It had been slated for November 23, but Bush had to attend his mother's funeral that day in Connecticut, so the meeting was postponed.) Bush was inclined to intervene boldly in Somalia. General Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said American troops could get in and get out quickly. No one voiced outright opposition to sending a large U.S. force, but fear of getting stuck in a Vietnam-like "quagmire"—that word was used—was mentioned. It was brushed aside as

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unlikely, and Bush decided on the strong option. At least that would be offered to Boutros-Ghali. Lawrence Eagleburger, the acting secretary of state, was assigned to go to New York immediately to confer with the U.N. chief.

He met with Boutros-Ghali that night. The secretary general said he'd consider the U.S. offer. As luck would have it, Boutros-Ghali was feeling an even greater sense of urgency than he expressed in his November 24 letter. He'd gotten a gloomy memo that day from Merrick Goulding, undersecretary general of the U.N. Conditions in Somalia were worse than ever, Goulding wrote. Warlords were stopping aid convoys and stealing everything. A state of anarchy existed. On November 29 Boutros-Ghali sent another letter to the Security Council, citing the Eagleburger visit and casting the U.S. offer in favorable terms. He stressed the limited nature of any U.S. military role. The enabling resolution could say, he noted, "that the purpose of the operation was to resolve the immediate security problems and that it would be replaced by a United Nations peace-keeping operation."

On December 2 the council voted unanimously to accept the American scheme. On December 3 the NSC met again and Powell outlined operational plans putting 28,000 American soldiers in Somalia. On December 4 Bush announced his decision to deploy troops in Somalia. "Our mission has a limited objective to open the supply routes, to get the food moving, and to prepare the way for a U.N. peacekeeping force to keep it moving," the president said.

Does all this really represent a new doctrine, a Bush Doctrine? Yes, but it's a narrow doctrine. It applies only to places or crises where the United States has no strategic, political, or economic interest. In such cases the United States, as the world's lone superpower, now has "the luxury of being entangled in humanitarian campaigns," a White House official said. As best I can tell, four criteria must be met to trigger American intervention. The problem must be horrendous (like genocide in Somalia), the chances of success very high, the costs very low, and force used only as a last resort. If these sound like the conditions laid down in "just war" theory, it's because they are. Walter Kansteiner, the NSC press officer, noticed this when listening to his boss, Scowcroft, explain the justification for sending troops to Somalia. Kansteiner should know. He wrote a book touching on just war theory.

What makes the concept of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia new is that there's no analogy to it. The closest thing is the limited intervention in 1991 to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq after Desert Storm. In fact, the day before the first deputies' meeting on Somalia, Fred Cuny, a humanitarian relief official, visited Paul Wolfowitz, the defense undersecretary for policy planning, at the Pentagon. He lobbied for a repeat of the Kurdish operation in Somalia. In that case, Operation Provide Comfort, the United States used few ground troops but heavy air power to keep Iraqi soldiers from Kurdish turf. One Pentagon official described such an operation this way: "You tell the bad guys to get out of the area you want to operate in."

At the deputies' meeting, Wolfowitz didn't bring a Pentagon position. Often the Pentagon representative is reticent at these sessions, fearing its position will leak. This time, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney was out of town and Powell was noncommittal. "That's very different from being opposed," an official noted. The deputies quickly turned to what one participant called "an option that'll work." This involved American troops and combat rules of engagement. At the second deputies' session—there were four—General David Jeremiah, Powell's deputy, said U.S. forces could quickly halt the interference with aid supplies and get food to starving Somalis. So massive deployment became an option, one that became reality when spurred by Boutros-Ghali's letter. "It's questionable we'd have done anything without that letter," a senior White House official says.

Bush's biggest fear was leaving a time bomb for his successor. When President-elect Bill Clinton visited the White House on November 12, he and Bush discussed Somalia. Since then Scowcroft has been in daily communication with Sandy Berger, a Clinton transition official. And another Clinton foreign policy adviser, Madeline Albright, moved into an office in the White House in late November. At the NSC meeting on November 25, Bush said, "I don't want to leave an unfulfillable commitment to the next president." Thus the Bush plan calls for the withdrawal of U.S. forces to begin by Inauguration Day, January 20. By then, Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater says, the American contingent should be down to fewer than 1,000 troops. If all goes well, a large multinational U.N. force should be in place. The American intervention caused various countries to volunteer more than 10,000 troops.

Inside the administration, practically no full-blown opposition emerged to the Bush Doctrine. But there are skeptics. Vice President Dan Quayle's national security adviser, Karl Jackson, raised doubts at the deputies' meetings. Quayle himself told an associate he's apprehensive about "turning the Army into a division of the Peace Corps." One Bush adviser says the operation may backfire whether it's successful or not. If it works, the military may be dragged from its national security mission again and again. If it fails, the United States may become wary of intervening anywhere for any reason. House Republican Whip Newt Gingrich sent a letter to Bush advising caution. Quayle's chief of staff, Bill Kristol, privately expressed concern about sending troops to Somalia. Republican Senator Hank Brown of Colorado has become the chief GOP foe of the deployment. But he was silent when Bush briefed congressional leaders in the Cabinet Room on December 4 before addressing the nation.

Bush left one important question unanswered in his speech: Where does the Bush Doctrine apply and

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where doesn't it? The president told aides he didn't want to bother with explaining that day where he won't act militarily (in Bosnia, for instance). "Let's get right to it," he said, meaning Somalia. "I want to emphasize," he said in the televised address, "that I understand the United States alone cannot right the world's wrongs, but we also know that some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement, that American action is often necessary as a catalyst for broader involvement of the community of nations." Not a clue in that statement. Bush gives a foreign policy speech at Texas A&M on December 15. It's a chance to spell out when the United States should intervene for humanitarian reasons and when it shouldn't. I hope Bush seizes it. •

Waiting for welfare reform.

WORKFAIL

By Paul Offner

Last spring it looked as though welfare was going to figure prominently in the presidential campaign. President Bush brought up the subject whenever he could, claiming to have an agenda "to change welfare and make the able-bodied work." Some feared that welfare recipients were going to be made the scapegoats for the nation's economic ills, and that the president once again would use race as the subtext. "In 1988 it was Willie Horton," said Tim Russert, Washington bureau chief of NBC News. "In 1992 it's going to be Willy Welfare."

It didn't work out that way. There were a handful of T.V. spots on the subject, but the topic barely came up in the debates. As far as the public was concerned, Bush and Bill Clinton took the same position: critical of welfare, and in favor of work. There was little to argue about.

In fact, Clinton's views on welfare differed significantly from the president's, and understanding those differences is critical to building the public support that will be needed if the Clinton plan is to have any chance of being enacted into law. For few subjects arouse such emotions or generate such fissures in Congress as welfare.

Only one significant reform has been approved since the federal welfare statute was first enacted in 1935: the Family Support Act of 1988. It passed with little opposition as the result of a historic compromise between liberals and conservatives: government must help welfare recipients obtain work skills, but recipients must reciprocate by attending classes. After that, they must work if they are able, preferably in the private sector, otherwise in a publicly funded job.

That was the theory. In practice, the bill's drafters (of whom Clinton was one) knew Congress would not be able to fully fund the program. So they did the only thing they could: they dropped the requirement that all able-bodied recipients participate. Today only one in five eligible recipients is actually enrolled in the welfare reform program.

When there are only sufficient funds to serve a small portion of the caseload, the question is, whom do you serve? The practical answer, which is reflected in the statute, is to take volunteers first—the recipients who want to go to school or get skills training. And that's what the states are doing. But volunteers are already motivated to succeed. Many would leave welfare on their own in time (every year between one-third and one-half of AFDC recipients leave the rolls, mostly through marriage). The challenge of the Family Support Act was to do something about the others, those who are *not* motivated, who are at risk of long-term dependency.

Consider the activities that recipients are going into. In many of the demonstration projects before the Family Support Act was enacted, workfare was a major activity, often eclipsing education and training. Not anymore. Half of the welfare reform enrollees today are in education. One in ten is in post-secondary education. Only 3 percent are in workfare, doing park and public facility maintenance, and low-skilled service work for local government and non-profit agencies. In twenty-one states there is no workfare at all. In part, this is because many case workers and administrators dislike workfare, believing it to be punitive. But it's also because the programs are voluntary, and people don't volunteer for workfare.

And that's not the only problem. One of the major goals of welfare reform is to change the assumptions confronting a young woman as she contemplates having a baby and going on welfare to support it. But a program that reaches only one recipient in five is hardly going to undermine the welfare culture. Indeed, that's the conclusion reached by researchers from the Rockefeller Institute of Government, who recently studied the effects of the Family Support Act in ten states.

In practice, welfare reform has worked out the way liberals hoped it would. Participation is voluntary, most recipients are going to school or job training, and workfare has all but vanished. The only problem is that politicians talk as if the Family Support Act never happened, and states are under tremendous pressure to come up with new reforms because caseloads are growing rapidly and the public is angry.

For conservatives, the solution is simple: cut out all the expensive education programs, and force everyone into low-cost workfare. Unfortunately, as Mencken would have said, the argument is neat, plausible—and wrong. Workfare is expensive, about $2,000 per participant per year (and that's without day care). Enrollees

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must be carefully supervised and materials must be provided. Participants who don't show up are sanctioned, or are supposed to be, and sanctions can be appealed, which means hearing officers and attorneys.

What it comes down to is that everyone is for welfare reform until they realize how much it costs. Last spring my boss, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, proposed spending an additional $4.5 billion a year for the Family Support Act so that all those eligible could be served. The response was less than deafening. At a March 30 hearing, Moynihan told a Bush administration representative that his bill would never pass. "The Democratic Congress would not dream of passing it, and you would not dream of signing it because it would make everybody do what they say they want to do, which is to put the able-bodied to work," Moynihan said.

Certainly that has been true of the Bush administration. The president is all for reforming welfare, but he won't spend any money on it. His whole program consists of the proposition that we should make it easier for states to try new approaches. States have come up with a host of them—incentives for welfare mothers to marry, to make sure their children receive their health checkups, to stop having additional children, and so on—but none of these has much to do with the real welfare problem.

Consider the freeze on benefits for additional children. The average number of children in welfare families has been dropping for many years, and is now 1.9, the same as in middle-class families. So welfare mothers having too many kids is not the problem. And even if it were, a small change in benefits is not likely to affect something as basic as childbearing behavior. But the state proposals are popular and cost nothing. (One of the conditions of the federal waivers that must be obtained is that expenditures not increase.) Of course, the one thing they do *not* do is increase participation, since that would almost certainly increase costs. Yet that is the essential reform.

Bill Clinton seems to understand this. His plan would give all recipients two years in which to obtain the education and training they need, after which they would have to work. Most importantly, he has budgeted $6 billion a year by 1996, so that all able-bodied recipients will

Per*plexed*?

It's blockbuster season yet again, and America mills about the local mall's cinemaplex seeking to maximize its escape dollar. In honor of this annual ritual, a lexical look at how the enjoyment of Hollywood motion pictures has mutated in recent years.

ambiPepsi
n. a cola beverage that makes a low-key appearance in a film, causing the viewer to wonder whether the film's maker was striving for realism or merely succumbing to product placement dollar temptation

micropoint
n. the point in a movie where the viewer is left with the sensation that micromanaging studio executives added extraneous plot elements deemed commercially important (e.g.: pyrotechnics, oddly beside-the-point love interests, and endings in which characters stand around smiling at each other)

dead chuckle
n. a theoretically humorous moment in a movie at which nobody in the audience laughs since they've seen that same moment many times previously in trailers (e.g.: most of *The Addams Family*)

dead chuckler
n. the one person in the audience who laughs at the *dead chuckle*, causing audience members to wonder what sort of person that person is

trailer park
n. the period before a film where excessive numbers of trailers are shown

tornadoed
adj. describes a movie that audiences choose not to attend because they've seen its trailer too often

Winnebago
adj. describes an enormous trailer that reveals a film's entire plot, rendering actual attendance of the movie irrelevant (e.g.: *Green Card*)

soundflation
n. the gratuitous insertion of music into a movie so as to boost sound-track sales

bib-lash
n. lowered viewer attendance suffered by a movie that has too many product tie-ins (e.g.: *Batman Returns*)

rentiquette
n. the recent rise of in-theater bad behavior (mainly viewers discussing a movie out loud as it progresses) caused by excessive movie viewing on home VCRs

adversion
n. the general mood of hostility and ill will that follows the screening of a paid advertisement before a movie

DOUGLAS COUPLAND

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have to participate—at least after two years (it's not yet clear whether short-termers would also have to enroll).

There will be a great debate in Congress over the proposed work requirements. My fear is that by the time Congress gets through with it, there will be so many exceptions and special provisions that little will have changed. (See "Welfare Waffle" by Mickey Kaus, TNR, October 12.) But at a minimum, able-bodied recipients should be required to study, attend skills training, or work as a condition for receiving their welfare checks. That's what the Family Support Act was supposed to give us. That's what the experience of the last four years has taught us. Unfortunately, Congress provided only a small fraction of the necessary funds four years ago. It's time to correct that mistake.

PAUL OFFNER is a legislative assistant to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Africa's dysfunctional politics.

CONTINENTAL DRIFT

By Robert D. Kaplan

In 1915 an exasperated President Woodrow Wilson sent in the United States Marines to occupy Haiti. Over the preceding seventy-two years, Haiti had seen 102 revolutions and coups d'état—a succession of operatic savagery equal to Grand Guignol. The United States, seeing that its neighbor had reached the point of complete anarchy, was determined to restart the political process in Port-au-Prince. Wilson hoped a mere intervention would suffice. But the Marines didn't leave until 1934. By then Wilson was long dead and U.S. taxpayers had modernized Haiti, with new roads, a native civil service, a health network, a national guard, and many other infrastructure and bureaucratic improvements. Within a few years the political situation had deteriorated again to the point where Haitian doctors sold off the drugs and supplies from the health service in one huge scam. By the 1950s François "Papa Doc" Duvalier had begun his climb to power, and Haiti prepared for new levels of barbarism.

Haiti's tragic history should be a cautionary tale for those now eagerly pursuing Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. Military intervention can do little to heal the body politic of a land that lacks the basis of a modern political culture—thanks to geographical isolation, low literacy rates, and a history of rape and desertion by colonialists. The French quit Haiti in 1804. The only outside political influence the Haitians experienced before the Marines invaded were the Bourbon and Jacobin varieties. To blame Haiti's problems on U.S. support for this or that Haitian ruler—as Somalia's problems are now being blamed on U.S. support for Mohammed Siad Barre—is a grave simplification.

Africa is full of Haitis. Liberians now wonder why U.S. Marines have not been sent ashore to help them instead of the Somalis, while the Friends of Africa—a group that includes Carter human rights liberals, some African-American groups, and others—ask why U.S. forces have not already deposed Zaire's despotic ruler, Mobutu Sese Seko. But Somalia and Liberia are only the first of many African nations doomed to go over the edge into anarchy and destitution for the same reasons Haiti has—with some West African countries in particular danger. The end of the cold war has only accelerated this process, since it was precisely the cold war that made many of these small countries relevant to the rest of the world and kept them intact. Now they don't matter unless their people are seen to be literally starving to death on television screens. Consequently, continent-wide aid, mainly from the United States, has been dwindling as Africans reel from deforestation, water depletion, demographic explosion, AIDS, and a rush to teeming African cities where people are gradually stripped of their only cultural defense: their age-old tribal traditions. Meanwhile, many African countries are ruled either by incompetent strongmen or by bands of youthful thugs given to drug use.

The other burden on Africa—and it is no less crippling for being ephemeral—is that it is still virtually impossible to talk honestly about the continent's problems. When it comes to any other region of the world, we immediately latch on to the ethnic and national cultures as the key determinants in analysis. As a journalist who has reported from fifty-odd countries, I know that the "national style" is the

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primary criterion used by foreign correspondents—and businessmen too—in judging countries and regions. Common sense tells us that just as individuals have bad childhoods and tragic personalities, so do nations. Imagine a discussion about Serbia, or about Germany, or Russia or Israel, without factoring in the national character. Such a discussion would be sterile, constricted, and devoid of all reality—which perfectly describes our national debate over Somalia, and over the rest of Africa too.

For too many years we—and Africans—have been imprisoned by the advice of the Africa scribes, those relief workers, environmentalists, and others from various aid organizations who told us that if the inhabitants had only used this type of seed, or had dug these types of wells, this or that famine would have been alleviated. Contrast this with our discussions about Bosnia. To say that there is something wrong with Bosnian Serb culture would elicit a yawn at this point. If my tone is sharp, that's because the silence about the risks of African involvement that initially greeted President Bush's decision to deploy troops in Somalia was nothing short of ear-splitting, and therefore a national disgrace. But I'll get around to Somalia later. I have more ground to cover.

Let me start by defining what I mean by "Africa" and by "culture." I exempt Arab North African states bordering the Mediterranean, whose regimes are better organized than those to the south, and—with the singular exception of Libya's—neither odious like Zaire's nor incompetent like Sierra Leone's. Their people, moreover, thanks to traditional Sunni Islam, are blessed by rock-solid family units. Cairo, for example, one of the world's most overcrowded and poorest cities, is also one of the world's safest and least violent: nowhere in Egypt, or in Tunisia, or in Morocco, or in other Arab lands will one encounter the strong-arm tactics that visitors have encountered in Lagos airport. (This is not to say things are perfect in North Africa: fundamentalists in Algeria, for example, have been known to rough up Berbers.) And if one is to believe world health statistics, AIDS is still rare among Arabs.

The rest of Africa is a pastiche of different cultures, values, and national styles. Cultures like the Yoruba in Nigeria and the Amhara in Ethiopia have rich, written traditions going back to antiquity. But, as in any part of the world, generalities can be made, and in Africa's case, they are not always pleasant. The Friends of Africa proclaim that Africa "must be accepted on its own terms." But it is also an axiom of area specialists that "comparison is the beginning of all serious scholarship." And comparing—Africa with Asia, Africa with Latin America, Africa with Eastern Europe—is exactly what the international business community does, and has to do, when deciding where to invest. And it is what State Department management experts are beginning to do as they contemplate scaling back diplomatic missions in places like West Africa while enlarging them in Asia. As a participant in the upcoming World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland—where each year top business executives talk for several days with policy analysts and political leaders—I was saddened to see from the program that Africa is the only place on the globe that is not included. The Balkans, on the other hand, despite the fighting, figure prominently as a lucrative market of the future. The Balkans, which have much higher rates of literacy and industrialization, can be discussed honestly by business and political types. If the same honesty is applied to Africa, the charge is racism. So discussion is immobilized, people get fed up, and they apply their energies and investment skills elsewhere.

Of course Africa boasts a few success stories. But these successes are beginning to unravel, and wherever there is an African society that works on a Latin American or a south Asian level, it is because colonial influence has been prodigious. Côte d'Ivoire (formerly the Ivory Coast) is the most telling example: here is an African nation with a capital city, Abidjan, that boasts paved roads, a reliable electricity current, international hotels, sophistication, and generally fine infrastructure. But Côte d'Ivoire's good fortune is directly attributed to the fact that the French colonialists never left. To this day, they play a significant role in running the country: propping up the currency, managing ministries, and keeping an expeditionary force of crack troops at the ready. By the 1980s there were five times as many Frenchmen in key jobs in Côte d'Ivoire as there were at independence in 1960, with French nationals holding 80 percent of all posts requiring a university degree.

Now, however, the French are trickling out of Côte d'Ivoire. President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who had the wisdom to allow the French to stay and to embrace their way of doing things, is approaching ninety, and a cluster of politicians are jockeying for position. A democratic system is emerging amid the sophisticates of Abidjan, but it is doubtful whether there is a broad enough democratic culture in the hinterlands to sustain it, especially given the pressures of demography and the possibility of some destabilization from the war in neighboring Liberia. Côte d'Ivoire may have seen its nicest days. Perhaps a democracy can take hold in a country like this, but few experts are betting on it.

Then there is Kenya, buttressed for decades by a white business community and Asian shopkeepers from the Indian subcontinent. Kenya is hostage to its own grim demographics: a 4 percent-plus population growth rate—the world's highest, made higher by polygamy—and the corresponding decrease in usable agricultural land. Though students and others fight for democracy in Nairobi against President Daniel Arap Moi's vile, incompetent rule, the basis for a stable, parliamentary culture appears thin. For decades it was primarily the Asians who constituted Kenya's urban middle class: lying between the thin stratum of wealthy Africans above and the mass of African peasantry below. This is exactly the position that Jews occupied throughout Eastern Europe in the pre-Nazi era, particularly in Romania. In fact, African prejudice against the "clever" and

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Desert Storm

When the U.S. Marines finish rescuing the starving in Somalia, perhaps they will do something about the nightmare next door in Sudan. For the past decade, the country's Islamic fundamentalist government has been at war with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, which dominates the Christian-animist south of the country. In the largest nation in Africa, it is a conflict that has crossed the political wires of the entire region.

The government gets financial and military support from Iran. The SPLA was supported by Ethiopia until Mengistu Haile Mariam fell last year. Now Ethiopia allows the Sudanese government to stage anti-SPLA operations from its border territory. But in the same part of Ethiopia, the separatist Oromo Liberation Front is fighting for hegemony and sympathizes with the SPLA. Neighboring countries Uganda, Kenya, and Zaire, whose non-Muslim majorities are ethnically related to the south Sudanese, side with the SPLA in part out of fear of fundamentalist infiltration of their own Muslim minorities. But they feel handcuffed by the Organization of African Unity's non-intervention convention and nagged by the possibility that south Sudan's independence might bring incursions into their own territories.

The Sudanese government's treatment of its own southern citizens has been on par with Saddam Hussein's behavior toward Iraqi Kurds. Khartoum has shown nothing but contempt for the non-Arabs it sardonically calls "brothers." The government donates tons of Iranian-subsidized food to Muslim states, but none to the hundreds of thousands starving in its own country. Missionaries evacuated from the besieged city of Juba told the World Food Program in Nairobi that hundreds of suspected rebel collaborators have been liquidated by government death squads. In central Sudan, government forces have so far dispossessed more than 100,000 members of the Nuba tribe—non-fundamentalist Muslims sympathetic to the rebels—and interned them in concentration camps. This has led Africa Watch, Amnesty International, and others to charge ethnic cleansing.

The war in south Sudan has uprooted at least half a million people. Many are in refugee camps in Kenya, while others are displaced internally. Although the north has enjoyed bumper crops and an improved standard of living over the past several years, the south has been racked by flooding and drought made worse by Khartoum's malevolent neglect. It has no infrastructure left. The south Sudanese face a feeding problem fast approaching Somalia's in magnitude, and must look to expatriate organizations to survive.

Now even that may be unavailing. The execution of two or more Sudanese USAID employees, which the government admitted in September, and the as yet unexplained deaths of four relief workers at the hands of the SPLA later in the same month have soured the United Nations and non-government organizations on working in Sudan. The U.N. has pared down its once-robust Operation Lifeline Sudan to a skeleton crew. And because the Sudanese government has sealed off much of the south from the media, the region's suffering has been widely ignored. Another factor, of course, is the deflecting proximity of Somalia, Africa's current cause célèbre. And the complexity of Sudan's political whirl has made the U.S. State Department timid. According to its "watching brief" on the conflict, the United States is to remain neutral on the final political outcome, while encouraging a peace process and supporting humanitarian efforts.

The United States has, however, been vocal in criticizing the government. Herman Cohen, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, called Sudan "an international outcast." But chastisements from the West simply steel Khartoum's resolve. The government claims that the West wants to "contain" Islamic fundamentalism because it is the only movement large and cohesive enough to compete globally with American-style democratic pluralism, now that Soviet communism is a memory.

The United States has been pushing the U.N. to pass a resolution on Sudan, but the result is unlikely to amount to more than an inspiration message. SPLA Chairman John Garang has suggested a U.N. arms and fuel embargo or the deployment of U.N. military observers. Such actions have been impotent in ex-Yugoslavia and Somalia, but in Sudan they could be more effective, since there are essentially just two combatants to edge toward compromise.

For now, that is. The SPLA itself is split along tribal and personal lines, between Garang's largely Dinka mainstream faction and the breakaway group known as Nasir, after the city where it is based, which is composed largely of members of the Nuer and Shilluk tribes. The Nasir faction accuses Garang of tyranny and brutality, and is pushing for democratic governance of the SPLA. Garang admits that his faction is sometimes brutal and certainly not democratic, but he argues that a guerrilla movement cannot function like a state. His zeal seems to have triumphed over the Nasir group's moderation. The Nasir faction has marginalized itself by acquiescing to a Khartoum-dictated agenda for peace that would ultimately require south Sudan to decide the issue of secularization on a province-by-province basis. Garang has persuasively condemned this as a "divide and conquer" strategy.

More recently, Garang has presented a comprehensive peace plan. He has proposed two confederate states with mutual defense obligations but separate constitutions. South Sudan would become a secular state no longer subject to the crudely retributive Islamic penal code. Garang believes a transitional period of confederacy could lead either to a unified secular Sudan or two independent nations, but he is hopeful it would buy non-fundamentalist allies in the north the time they need to consolidate power and oust the present government.

The United States, Israel, Egypt, and the East African states agree on one key point: peace in Sudan would be in their common interest because it would probably reduce Iran's influence in Africa. "Islamic fundamentalism cannot thrive in an atmosphere of peace and stability," says Garang. He has seized the moment by setting forth a coherent peace proposal and soliciting regional and global support for it. With the Sudanese government as the only alternative, it would seem that East Africa and the world community have no choice but to help him. After you, Bill.

JONATHAN STEVENSON

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"shifty" Asians in Kenya and elsewhere throughout the continent mirrors exactly the prejudice against Jews in the largely illiterate societies of the pre-war Balkans. It is a spine-chilling hatred built upon the jealousy of one underachieving culture toward another that is blessed with an elaborate and iron-tight family structure, allowing for enviable work habits and economic success.

Indeed, as Kenya makes it increasingly difficult for the white settler community to do business, and as Asians become increasingly terrified of the expulsions and mob violence that have befallen them already in places like Idi Amin's Uganda, they may just leave and take their skills elsewhere.

Beyond Côte D'Ivoire and Kenya, the picture becomes even bleaker. When Africa freed itself of European rule in the 1960s, another kind of tyranny soon followed, later described as that of the "Big Men": rulers such as Amin in Uganda, Mobutu in Zaire, Doe in Liberia, and Mohammed Siad Barre in Somalia; and less violent types, such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, who were dismantling their countries' economies through crackpot socialist schemes. All contributed to polities that have become barren ground for any democratic or even barely functioning political future.

Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile Mariam is, of course, a prime example, but it took some time before he made it into the club of nasties. The Friends of Africa in the media placed the responsibility for the 1984 famine on the drought and Ronald Reagan's insensitivity. Only in 1988 or so did it dawn on us that the drought was a consequence of modern war and the ability of one ethnic group, the Amharas, to starve out other ethnic groups, the Eritreans and the Tigreans. But by then the famine was obscured by other issues: all that remained in our collective memories were the images of Ted Kennedy and Harry Belafonte cradling starving Ethiopian children. And now another photo-op is upon us: that of the fresh-faced Marine spoon-feeding a Somali child on Christmas Day.

The era of the Big Men was supposed to give way to democracy and rebuilding in Africa. Just wait for the likes of Amin, Mobutu, Doe, and Siad Barre to go, we were told. Amin was succeeded by Milton Obote, who slaughtered a million people, a few hundred thousand more than Amin did. (I was there to count some of the skulls.) Obote was succeeded by Yoweri Museveni, one of Africa's most talented and honest rulers. But Museveni has been battling an AIDS epidemic, economic destitution, and tribal conflicts. If he is murdered tomorrow, no prudent area specialist should be surprised. In Liberia, Doe was done in by Prince Johnson, an "alcoholic psychopath" who took part in cutting off the late leader's ears. But Charles Taylor now has the upper hand. His followers are described as "drug-crazed," given to mutilations, and with no discernible ideology. The new hope is for post-Mobutu Zaire. But Zaire is a sprawling territory of more than 200 tribes, and one thing I've learned in Africa is to never, never assume that things can't get worse—just look at Somalia after Siad Barre, and Liberia after Doe. I'll never forget being in a crowd of cheering Sudanese after democracy was declared following the overthrow of Jaafar Nimeiri in 1985. By 1989 young Arab soldiers were back in power, starving to death millions of Africans.

These iniquities are themselves being overshadowed by the rapid advance of AIDS, which is undeniably reflective of a deeper societal chaos: specifically a family structure under attack by the rush of African men to the cities in search of work. The tradition of polygamy, coupled with the long periods of time men stay away from their villages, helps create a situation whereby it is common for men to have multiple female partners. Then, of course, there is tribalism, or ethnic conflict, which is the real cause of famines. In Biafra in 1968, millions of Ibos were deliberately starved to death by their fellow Nigerians. In Ethiopia in 1984, I witnessed Tigrean peasants walk hundreds of miles to Sudan for food because Ethiopian government soldiers had denied them access to Western aid only a few miles from where they lived. In Sudan and Somalia now, one group contributes to the starvation of another. (See "Desert Storm" by Jonathan Stevenson, page 17.) To paraphrase the title of a novel by Ibo writer Chinua Achebe, things clearly seem to be falling apart.

My fear is that what lies beyond the stabilizing presence of the last Big Men is nothing, simply nothing, and that Somalia and Liberia are merely the first to fall. Some of the smaller West African nations may be candidates for one of two futures: as U.N. trusteeships, or as drug lord trusteeships, since the economies of these "countries," if that's what you call them, are small enough, and the young officers running them sufficiently corrupt, to be bought for cash the way Greek shipowners have bought Liberian mail drops—as sort of a fake, albeit legal, sovereignty.

Take Sierra Leone, a little country next to Liberia that is almost never in the news and thus assumed to be normal. In fact, different parts of this country are run by different tribal commanders. The official government is composed of young soldiers who control the capital of Freetown and some territory beyond. The smell of dope is said to be common in the palace. The streets of Freetown aren't paved. Water and electricity services are sporadic. The capital's few photocopy machines and faxes are therefore unreliable. Crime is rising. A Lebanese expatriate community, like the Asian one in Kenya, props up the economy, and is therefore begrudged for it. Peace Corps workers in the 1990s teach the same rudimentary farming techniques to the inhabitants that Peace Corps workers in the 1960s did. The literacy rate is 15 percent. The brain drain is almost complete: anyone with the wherewithal has left already.

Though U.S. policy in Liberia and elsewhere was critical in propping up nasty dictatorships, cold war realpolitik is not the source of the trouble. The empirical evidence, whether it be in literacy rates, infant mor-

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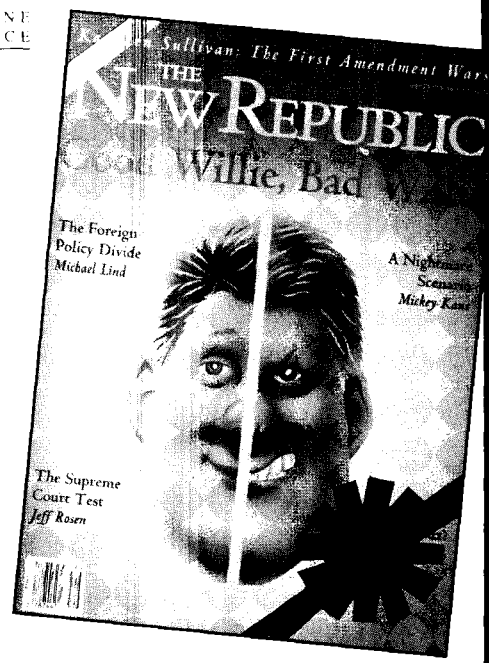

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tality rates, economic statistics, or whatever, proclaims a grim truth that the whole issue of race in America makes us afraid to utter: African culture, in a modern political sense, is simply dysfunctional, and requires adjustment in order to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. The time is long past when we can deceive ourselves with polite rationalizations, like the one offered the other day in *The Washington Post*, where it was pointed out that the Somalis are blessed with a rich oral tradition. An oral tradition usually implies the lack of a well-developed written tradition, on which the functioning of a modern bureaucratic government is based.

This is why the periodic call by the Friends of Africa for an African Marshall Plan or by the editors of *The Nation* for a "much larger developmental effort" is flawed. They forget that the billions of dollars of American aid was effective in postwar Europe precisely because there was a literate and relatively sophisticated bureaucratic tradition among those nations for absorbing and using the funds, with the minimum of corruption and mismanagement; so the aid didn't dissolve into the sand as it did in Haiti earlier in the century.

TransAfrica, a black American lobby, now tells us it is our responsibility to feed Somalia because it was we who created the Somali dictator Siad Barre, who in turn created the present situation. But this again is a gross distortion. Siad Barre is in part a natural summation of Somali political culture: of shifting armed clans that have always existed in a state of near anarchy. More significantly, he is also a partial consequence of the Carter human rights policy—which TransAfrica and like-minded groups no doubt supported—that resulted in the famous "superpower flip-flop" in the Horn of Africa in 1977: the Soviets got Ethiopia and we got Siad Barre and Somalia. Several years earlier Mengistu had emerged as the chief thug in the Ethiopian *Dergue* that had overthrown and murdered Haile Selassie. Henry Kissinger realized that Mengistu was looking for an alliance that would help him consolidate his power. Kissinger, and the Israelis too, were willing to sell him some weapons, because otherwise the Soviets were ready to give him arms and move into Ethiopia. The Carter people, repelled by Mengistu's human rights abuses, spurned him. The Soviets, however, understood what every experienced Africa hand did: that highland Ethiopians, whether Amhara, Eritrean, Tigrean, or Oromo, were the hardest-working, most efficient people of Africa. (What other African government could aspire to collectivizing millions and then actually be able to *do* it?) Somalia, a steamy, barely populated land mass, never could be anything but a strategic bit of real estate suitable for a landing strip. So the Soviets deserted Somalia for Somalia's historic enemy, Ethiopia, where the Soviets not only moved in but, for the first time in African history, exported a whole system of Stalinist collectivization, in which millions were moved out of ancestral villages and millions were starved. We had no choice back then but to accept Siad Barre and arm him against the Soviet regime next door. Or would TransAfrica have preferred that the Soviets grab Somalia too?

But such things constitute a reality we are no longer able to confront. I suspect that Somalia will, like Haiti, slip back into chaos as it becomes apparent that there is no political process to restart there. By then, however, U.S. troops will have been replaced by multinational troops and enough months will have gone by so that this stark truth will be overtaken by other events and news stories—exactly like our famine relief effort of 1984, which propped up Mengistu long enough for him to perpetrate other famines, which received much less news coverage. All we will remember is that photograph of a Marine feeding that Somali child.

Rather than a policy of dishonesty and withdrawal, alleviated by an occasional invasion that makes us feel good, we need brutal honesty and realistic involvement, in order to help cultures into the modern world, not to help existing regimes stay in place. Private investment will go only where Western businesspeople are impressed with the local political culture. Eritrea is a good example. Its inhabitants have a solid, documented record of efficient and non-corrupt use of the famine aid they received. Eritrea, therefore, is the focus of outside investor interest. It also has a minimal hope for political stability.

Given the failure of large-scale aid projects and the very modest successes of smaller ones, it is time to scale back our goals in Africa and to encourage whatever business investment exists. In the final analysis, private investment will do more for the continent than government aid, and is the seed corn—not the fruit—of political normality. As one World Bank official told me, "How can you aid governments that loot their own treasuries?" And by investing only in places where the political culture either works or is on the mend, the international business community can positively influence the evolution of local values—let cultures be determined by the law of the free market. What else can you do when the political culture is in such crisis that it won't even let you feed the inhabitants, unless you send in the Marines? •

Anywhere but Bosnia.

WHY AFRICA?

By Patrick Glynn

The central challenge of American foreign policy since the end of the cold war has been to devise a strategy that fuses American democratic principles with geopolitical interests in the service of constructing a genuine world order. The Bush administration, largely supine since the Gulf war,

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has been caught between two opposing public currents—an isolationist conservatism that eschews foreign entanglements unless vital interests are self-evidently at stake (as in the Gulf) and a vocal liberal humanitarianism reluctant to set limits to the U.S. capacity to intervene. The challenge has been to find a middle ground, a principle of selection that leads the United States to apply its diplomatic and military resources to problems central to the maintenance of world order, while avoiding endless entanglements around the globe. The effort to save lives in Somalia is laudable. But in choosing to intervene in Somalia, while eschewing further involvement in the Balkans, the administration has settled, in effect, on the worst of both worlds—an isolationist-tending foreign policy where intervention is generally shunned, and then chosen suddenly on criteria of military "ease" and sentiment.

The American desire to help Somalia is worthy enough. But it is far from clear whether the intervention will prove as easy or clean as the administration now suggests. Bush's confidence in its manageability rests primarily on a narrow military calculation—i.e., the belief in the ability of American ground troops and airpower to intimidate local warlords now preventing the delivery of relief to the countryside. Yet even if U.S. forces succeed in protecting themselves and those they may embrace under their umbrella, the vast problems of this region will be far from solved. Somalia is only one small part of a huge arc of suffering—marked by drought, recurrent civil war, and massive refugee flows that extend through Sudan, Ethiopia, and parts of Kenya. Throughout this vast expanse, thousands starve, and the delivery of relief has repeatedly been impeded by violence and political struggle. In neighboring Sudan, for example, relief planes have been downed by government forces and relief areas bombed. It is difficult to see how in the long run the United States will be able to set either temporal or geographic limits on this new involvement.

Ironically, many of the problems cited by the administration in eschewing intervention in Bosnia apply with greater force to Somalia. The conflict between warring clans is entrenched and ancient. Outside powers that in the past sought to intervene—in this instance, Britain and Italy—met with frustration and failure. Indeed, in certain respects the troubles in Somalia are deeper and far more daunting than anything in Europe. Hunger in Bosnia is entirely the product of war; in Somalia it is primarily the product of drought and the presence of huge populations on arid, non-arable land. Solving this problem may require massive relocations. It certainly cannot be solved with mere relief.

Before the recent Balkan war, Bosnia enjoyed a history of political stability, ethnic tolerance, and relative economic prosperity, whereas the history of Somalia has alternated between civil war and severe repression. Moreover, in Bosnia there is democracy, a freely elected government composed largely of Westernized, democratically minded politicians. In Somalia it is difficult to see who will rule, and it seems unlikely, to put it mildly, that any new government would remain democratic for long. In Bosnia there is a status quo ante to restore. In Somalia there seems no clear end to chaos.

The geopolitical significance of the two areas is hardly comparable. In the Balkans the United States confronts not only a blatant challenge to the international order—naked aggression and state-sponsored genocide by a sovereign government—but also the real possibility of a widened war that could embroil our NATO allies Greece and Turkey if, as seems likely, the Serbs begin large-scale "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo. Failure to calm the Balkans is contributing to a growing sense of doubt and instability throughout Eastern Europe, where newly constituted democratic governments face danger from lurking anti-democratic forces. The massive refugee flows from the Balkan war are unsettling Western European democracies and sowing political instability—especially in Germany, where fears of broadening Eastern European chaos and the prospect of still more refugees are strengthening the appeal of the far right.

Almost as important, the indifference of America in the face of Serbian aggression has contributed to measurably diminished U.S. influence in Western Europe, where NATO and American security guarantees now seem increasingly irrelevant and where the French are pressing not so subtly to exclude Americans from a new "Europeanized" security structure. Inaction in Bosnia has also garnered ill-will in the Islamic world, where U.S. unwillingness to aid a Muslim population under attack by Christians is unsettling moderate governments linked to Washington (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey) and fueling Islamic fundamentalism. Then there is Russia and its periphery, where extreme nationalists find in the Serbian example an enticing lesson for their own irredentist ambitions. Behind the Balkan war, in short, lies the potential for a far wider explosion, affecting the very core of the Western economic and security system.

Successful intervention—short of ground troops—in the Balkans would do more than avert a humanitarian disaster that, in time, may seem every bit as pressing to American television viewers as Somalia does today. It would solidify the eroding American position in Western Europe. It would help stabilize Eastern Europe and provide a sobering lesson to extreme nationalists in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. It would avert what may well be a wider war, with disastrous implications for NATO. It would help America's relations with the Muslim world. Above all, it would show an American will to maintain order where disorder most clearly threatens the international system.

It's not clear that such intervention would involve a greater risk than we are likely to incur in Somalia. The

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Bosnians themselves have urged against the provision of ground troops. They have asked only for arms (which they are illogically denied through international sanction) and some form of air cover: certainly enforcement of the no-fly zone, possibly attacks on Serbian heavy equipment in Bosnia, with the further possibility of threatening attacks on military targets within Serbia itself. NATO air power is close at hand, and whatever other problems we may face in the Balkans, no one could deny that NATO can beat Serbia in the air. The goal of such an operation—obtaining a meaningful cease-fire and exerting continued military and economic pressure on Serbia so that U.N. troops can be inserted in Bosnia, the people fed and cared for, refugees resettled, and genuine negotiations begun—is hardly more nebulous than that of the Somali operation. And the effort to achieve it would accomplish far more than the Somalian operation in re-establishing U.S. pre-eminence and restoring a sense of world order.

Indeed, the notion that the Somalia operation is more manageable has depended from the start on finessing the question of its ultimate objective. In General Colin Powell's peculiarly American metaphor, the purpose of the operation is sending in "the cavalry ... straightening things out for a while," and then turning things over to the "marshals." Already such a clean exit looks difficult to achieve. U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, at whose urging Somalia became a world and U.S. priority, is now calling for a major effort by American forces to disarm warring clans—despite the absence of such a mandate in the U.N. resolution and Washington's manifest reluctance to pacify the country at large. Initially the White House spoke, absurdly, of withdrawing U.S. forces by January 20. Now Powell notes that troops may remain for several months and that there may even be a need for a lingering Marine presence offshore.

One wonders why the massive military ingenuity and diplomatic clout that the Bush administration has mustered to make Somalia look "easy" could not be applied to Bosnia. There the argument for dividing the labor with allies is far stronger and more credible. Numerous states as diverse as Germany, Austria, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia have demonstrated a strong interest in the problem. Indeed, many have already offered financial aid or military forces. And there are the resources of NATO. NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner recently expressed public regret that the alliance had not done more. The answer is that this putatively "realist" administration never understood the Balkan crisis or its strategic and moral importance. It has concluded its term by engaging in an act of quixotic idealist intervention, which will do nothing to preserve George Bush's new order, while ignoring the one region that could have proved its cornerstone.

PATRICK GLYNN is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

The Serbian homefront.

MOB RULE

By Charles Lane

BELGRADE

The economic collapse of Serbia may be the best thing that ever happened to Jezdimir Vasiljevic. "Boss Jezda," as he styles himself, still looks like the small-time hustler he once was. His fireplug frame is draped in an off-the-rack pinstriped suit that flops over his shoe tops. A gigantic gold watch dangles from his wrist. A cheap cigar juts from a face framed by what looks like a five-dollar wig—but is in fact Boss Jezda's own hair. These days, however, Boss Jezda epitomizes capitalism, Belgrade-style. He controls Yugoskandic Bank, one of the fastest-growing private financial institutions in Serbia, as well as a chain of factories, retail shops, and gas stations where smuggled petrol goes for eight German marks a gallon. His company sponsored the chess match in Yugoslavia between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky. The latest tightening of international sanctions, designed to crack down on petroleum smuggling to Serbia, doesn't scare Boss Jezda. "The only effect was to raise prices," he scoffs, stubbing out another cigar.

But Boss Jezda's company is hardly a sign of capitalist renaissance in the Balkans. Rather, it is yet another measure of how deep the rot runs throughout the increasingly isolated Serbian republic ruled by hard-line President Slobodan Milosevic. Yugoskandic and other private banks make their millions by offering interest rates of up to 14 percent per month on hard currency deposits. A million Serbs now derive their only steady income from these monthly payments—about $100 to $200 on a typical account. But in Serbia's bankrupt economy, there's no way (at least no honest way) the banks can make enough money to sustain such astronomical interest payments. They are officially sanctioned Ponzi schemes that Milosevic is using to drum up hard currency for his government and to buy "social peace."

Boss Jezda denies it, but diplomats say the banks were started with profits from arms and petroleum smuggling, and continue to launder funds generated by such activities. One of the banks, Defiment, employs a well-known paramilitary leader implicated in ethnic cleansing as its "security chief," according to a Western European embassy here. Other paramilitary leaders also swagger about the capital, such as the Serbo-Australian known only as "Captain Dragan" (he has office space a few floors down from Boss Jezda) and Zeljko "Arkan" Raznjatovic, whose "Tiger Brigade" was responsible for savage atrocities against Muslims dur-

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ing the ethnic cleansing of eastern Bosnia.

Arkan operates out of an ice cream parlor in a wealthy neighborhood of Belgrade. There's no sign over the door, but you can tell the place is his by the gigantic socialist realist painting of Serbs marching under their tricolor banner—and the two muscular young men in trench coats pacing the sidewalk just outside. Arkan is a candidate for Parliament in the elections on December 20. He's running in Pristina, the capital of the heavily Albanian province of Kosovo. Arkan's campaign posters show him in a vintage Serbian chetnik military uniform, steely eyes gazing benignly, his hand resting on the shoulder of a little girl. "This is holy Serbian land," the poster says. Since the Albanians are going to boycott the vote in Kosovo, he'll probably win. Given the path-breaking role Arkan's men played in the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia, and the ever present threat that Milosevic is preparing to do the same in Kosovo, Arkan's appearance on the scene in Pristina is an ominous development. He's already opened a station for selling smuggled gas in the town; and he's getting into banking.

Everyone in Serbia knows that the banks are a scam. Yet most Serbs are too broke, too resigned, or too opportunistic to do anything but grab an attaché case and join the cash queue stretching for a hundred yards outside Yugoskandic's branch office on Marshal Tito Street. "The one thing I can't forgive Milosevic for is how he's legitimized organized crime here," a young medical student grumbles. "It's gotten so bad that if I see someone who has nice clothes and drives a pretty car, I don't even want to know them, you know?" In the next breath, she asks whether I think the banks can survive until March, when her $125,000 six-month certificate of deposit is supposed to mature.

The atmosphere in Belgrade is so saturated by intimidation, ethnic hatred, absurd hopes, and outright lies that the public can almost be forgiven for being sucked in by the false promise of the private banks. The news on Belgrade Television, the only channel that reaches the entire republic (as well as Serb-held areas of Bosnia), is a nightly compendium of conspiracy theories, turgid speeches, and lurid rumors—all conveying the view that Serbia and its leader, Milosevic, stand alone against a vast, genocidal German-American-Croat-Muslim plan. Scenes of shells blasting houses in Sarajevo are accompanied by a narrative telling viewers that Serb troops once again were forced to respond to Muslim aggression. My favorite outrageous Belgrade T.V. report concerned the Serb babies whom Muslims fed to the lions at the Sarajevo zoo. I was amused, until I heard the story repeated verbatim by a 55-year-old woman standing in line outside the Yugoskandic bank. "That's why the Serbs had to kill the animals," she explained.

Belgrade's Museum of Applied Art currently features "The Genocide Museum," an exhibition of graphic photos of Serbs who have been hacked, stabbed, shot, and mutilated by Croats. A section downstairs is devoted to butchery by the fascist Croatian independent state during World War II. It displays black-and-white shots of bloated bodies washed up on the banks of the Sava River, as well as lovingly exhumed bits of skin, teeth, and bone. Upstairs, contemporary horrors are presented in living color. The curators have included a picture of Pope John Paul II above a photo of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman. Croat atrocities, a sign says, "are backed up by the organized force of state, church, and party." Nearly every high school student in Belgrade has been brought to absorb the message that, as Svetlana Isakovic, the museum's director, puts it, "what's happening now is just a continuation of World War II."

Milan Panic, the 62-year-old prime minister of what's left of Yugoslavia, is the only remotely credible political force standing between Milosevic and uncontested power. Panic, who parlayed $200 and a U.S. immigration visa into a vast pharmaceutical manufacturing fortune, returned to his native land at Milosevic's invitation last July. At the time, Milosevic thought Panic might help him clean up Serbia's image abroad. Instead, he got off the reservation. Waving his arms and expostulating in Serbian-accented English and American-accented Serbo-Croatian, Panic warns that only he can democratize Serbia and get the sanctions lifted. A good many Serbians, at least those in Belgrade who have access to independent T.V. and radio, have been listening.

The Panic-Milosevic showdown pits a quixotic, American-style liberal against a former Communist steeped in the sinuous political culture of the Balkans. Milosevic seems to be toying with his opponent. A month ago the Serbian president sent his goons to seize the Federal Interior Ministry, the one agency with any muscle that Panic conceivably could have used against him. Last week Milosevic cast the Panic campaign into limbo by arranging for the electoral commission to rule Panic ineligible for the presidency because he hasn't been a resident of Serbia for at least a year, as required by a law Milosevic quietly pushed through Parliament on November 3. Ever the democrat, Panic appealed to the Supreme Court, which happens to be headed by the same member of Milosevic's Socialist Party as the electoral commission. The court threw the matter back to the commission, which promptly ruled against Panic again. Panic appealed again, and this time Milosevic let him win.

There's little chance that Milosevic and his paramilitary minions will go quietly even in the unlikely event that they do lose the election. Milosevic still enjoys considerable popular support, particularly among the older generation who depend on his government for pensions and on Belgrade T.V. for information. But voters do have an alternative to both Milosevic and Panic. Boss Jezda is a candidate for president too. "I decided to run as a private referendum, to find out how many of my clients are ready to protect their income and myself," he explains. It's the kind of information a man needs when his business activities depend so heavily on the trust of his customers. "Besides," he adds, "I didn't want any of the other candidates hitting me up for contributions."

CHARLES LANE is Berlin bureau chief of *Newsweek*.

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Making Love

In the novel she is 15, he is 27. In the film the ages have been changed to 18 and 32. This bow to convention slightly weakens an important aspect of the story, the way that the very oddity of this pairing discloses sexual and allied truths. The author, who wrote this autobiographical novel in 1984, is still so intent on those truths that she recently rewrote the book, to explore differently and to reveal even more.

The author is of course Marguerite Duras. The novel, now a film, is **The Lover** (MGM). The rewritten novel is *The North China Lover* (New Press, 231 pp., $19.95). This second version was begun as notes for the screenplay of the planned film. But the film was based on the original novel, which may be one reason why Duras has not warmly supported the film. For myself, good as I thought the film was, I was glad to read the second version. I'd be glad to read a third version: an author of Duras's talent would bring something new to it, just as a gifted painter can return to an earlier subject several times and paint it differently each time.

I won't compare the two novels. I'll note only that the new one is conceived in cinematic terms (Duras has directed films); that in the first version the protagonist is generally referred to as "the girl" and in the second as "the child"; and that the second contains sexual passages involving the child and her adored younger brother. "It was that afternoon, in that sudden confusion of happiness, in her brother's sweet and mocking smile, that the child realized she had lived out one love between [her lover] and her little brother in eternity."

The facts stripped bare are misleading, as bare facts often are about art works. (Look at Wilde's *Salome.* A teenage girl dances in a manner that excites her stepfather-uncle, and he has her killed when she kisses the severed head of the man she desired. What do these facts really tell us about *Salome?*) Duras wanted to explore what happened to her when she entered the domain of sex, when she realized that this domain is a potent underworld on which superstructures of propriety have long been built, and when she perceived the forces that constantly threaten those proprieties. And she discovered, too, that, merely by being female, she had huge powers and huge vulnerabilities in the world of males.

In a sense *The Lover* is abstract art, the distillation of matters that are usually mingled with mundane dailiness but are here isolated and plumbed. The girl, never named, is French, the daughter of a widowed teacher in a Vietnamese town, early in the 1930s. The girl goes to high school in Saigon and boards there. One day, on a ferry crossing the Mekong River en route to school after a holiday, she meets a wealthy young Chinese man who lives in Saigon. He offers her a lift in his chauffeured limousine.

He is smitten by her. She is quietly excited by male attention, flattered that it comes from an experienced man, and is also impressed by his wealth. (In the film the first time that we see her small breasts jiggle under her dress is as she sits next to him while the limousine bumps over the rough roads. It's a subtle touch.)

His subsequent wooing consists of waiting outside her dormitory in his limousine. She is drawn to it. She enters the car. He takes her to an apartment he keeps in a slummy part of Saigon. There they enter a kind of isolation chamber in which very little exists except their love-making. There, in the stillness of this shadowy, warm-cool room, with the clatter of the city just outside, he initiates her—into sexual experience and into self-revelation. For instance, she asks whether he maintains this place for his mistresses, and when he says yes, this—possibly to her surprise—pleases her.

After subsequent assignations, the man meets her family, the worn mother whom the girl likes, the older brother whom she loathes, the younger one whom she adores. They allow the man to spend money on them—lavish dinners, cash for pressing bills—although they suspect the affair with the girl. It all ends after a year and a half when the man marries a rich Chinese woman selected by his father, when the girl and her family return to France.

Toward the end the mother asks the girl if she saw the man merely for his money. The girl says yes; and in that word, which she hopes her mother knows is a lie, is the nub of her newfound complexities and preserves. What she doesn't foresee is the revelation on the ship going back, occasioned by a piece of music, that she had been and still is in love with the man. And in a

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Glengarry Glen Ross. *David Mamet's excellent play is a play; but his adaptation brings a great deal of its depth and energy to the screen. Sterling performances. (Reviewed 10/26/92)* **Intervista.** *Two hours of bliss. Federico Fellini's cleverly contrived rhapsody about his life and ways of working. Possibly the best film ever made about not having a film to make. (12/7/92)* **Simple Men.** *Confirmation that Hal Hartley's writing-directing gifts are wry and stimulating. About two brothers looking for their fugitive radical father but really about its whimsical mode. (11/9/92)* **Van Gogh.** *His last sixty-seven days on earth seen by Maurice Pialat as a sort of transition between flesh and spirit. Jacques Dutronc as the painter rings strangely true. (11/30/92)* **—SK**

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brief postlude, set years later, she learns that he was in love, too—for the only time in his life. Thus one of the novel's main themes is that an affair that seems merely physical can conceal emotional time bombs. (It's a theme of Chekhov's story "The Lady with the Little Dog.")

The director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, understood that the real locus of the film's action is the girl's body, the real locus of the themes her mind. He made a daring and wonderfully successful choice for the part—an English model named Jane March. (The film is in English.) She was 17 when the picture was made and had never acted before; but she had eight months before shooting began in which to prepare, took some dancing and mime lessons, and, surely with much help from Annaud, she accomplishes the role beautifully.

March's face combines freshness with blunt-featured, almost assertive sensuality. In keeping with her role, the sensuality comes into focus only as her immersion in sex progresses. Her nuances of thought and inflection, simple, almost reticent, enrich the role with disturbing implications.

The man is Tony Leung, an actor well known in Chinese films. He is perfectly matched with March, slim and silken, wise yet hotly sexual. There is a third sensual presence—the voice of Jeanne Moreau on the sound track, as Duras remembering and recounting, filling our ears with contralto musk.

The two previous Annaud films I've seen, *Quest for Fire* and *The Name of the Rose*, were attempts to leave the beaten track that were more courageous than convincing. Here his work is lovely (including the screenplay that he wrote with Gerard Brach). It's not hard to capture the teeming bustle of Asian streets and roads, but Annaud does it with a keen, sympathetic eye. It *is* hard to bring a new view to explicit sex scenes, but with Robert Fraisse's camera, Annaud avoids any hint of either triteness or exploitation. He uses the sex intensely, but as a clarified medium for what is happening to this girl, and he is helped by the tidal score of Gabriel Yared. The entire ensemble has created a film that, partly because of the dangers it embraces, haunts the memory.

Screenplays Published. Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust* (New Press, 173 pp., $17.95 paper) and Hal Hartley's *Simple Men* and *Trust* in one volume (Faber and Faber, 184 pp., $12.95 paper). Both books are plentifully illustrated; some of the Dash photos are in color. It's cheering to see both books, assurances that admirable off-center films are gaining additional support. •

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The Nobel Lecture.

The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory

By Derek Walcott

Felicity is a village in Trinidad on the edge of the Caroni plain, the wide central plain that still grows sugar and to which indentured cane cutters were brought after emancipation, so the small population of Felicity is East Indian, and on the afternoon that I visited it with friends from America, all the faces along its road were Indian, which, as I hope to show, was a moving, beautiful thing, because this Saturday afternoon *Ramleela*, the epic dramatization of the Hindu epic the *Ramayana*, was going to be performed, and the costumed actors from the village were assembling on a field strung with different-colored flags, like a new gas station, and beautiful Indian boys in red and black were aiming arrows haphazardly into the afternoon light. Low blue mountains on the horizon, bright grass, clouds that would gather color before the light went. Felicity! What a gentle Anglo-Saxon name for an epical memory.

Under an open shed on the edge of the field, there were two huge armatures of bamboo that looked like immense cages. They were parts of the body of a god, his calves or thighs, which, fitted and reared, would make a gigantic effigy. This effigy would be burned as a conclusion to the epic. The cane structures flashed a predictable parallel: Shelley's sonnet on the fallen statue of Ozymandias and his empire, that "colossal wreck" in its empty desert.

Drummers had lit a fire in the shed and they eased the skins of their tablas nearer the flames to tighten them. The saffron flames, the bright grass, and the hand-woven armatures of the fragmented god who would be burned were not in any desert where imperial power had finally toppled, but were part of a ritual, evergreen season that, like the cane-burning harvest, is annually repeated, the point of such sacrifice being its repetition, the point of the destruction being renewal through fire.

Deities were entering the field. What we generally call "Indian music" was blaring from the open platformed shed from which the epic would be narrated. Costumed actors were arriving. Princes and gods, I supposed. What an unfortunate confession! "Gods, I suppose" is the shrug that embodies our African and Asian diasporas. I had often thought of but never seen *Ramleela*, and had never seen this theater, an open field, with village children as warriors, princes, and gods. I had no idea what the epic story was, who its hero was, what enemies he fought, yet I had recently adapted the *Odyssey* for a theater in England, presuming that the audience knew the trials of Odysseus, hero of another Asia Minor epic, while nobody in Trinidad knew any more than I did about Rama, Kali, Shiva, Vishnu, apart from the Indians, a phrase I use pervertedly because that is the kind of remark you can still hear in Trinidad: "apart from the Indians."

It was as if, on the edge of the Central Plain, there was another plateau, a raft on which the *Ramayana* would be poorly performed in this ocean of cane, but that was my writer's view of things, and it is wrong. I was seeing the *Ramleela* at Felicity as theater when it was faith.

Multiply that moment of self-conviction when an actor, made-up and costumed, nods to his mirror before stepping onstage in the belief that he is a reality entering an illusion, and you would have what I presumed was happening to the actors of this epic. But they were not actors. They had been chosen; or they themselves had chosen their role in this sacred story that would go on for nine afternoons over a two-hour period till the sun set. They were not amateurs but believers. There was no theatrical term to define them. They did not have to charge their psyches to perform their roles. Their acting would probably be as buoyant and as natural as those bamboo arrows crisscrossing the afternoon pasture. They believed in what they were playing, in the sacredness of the text, in the validity of India, while I, out of the writer's habit, searched for some sense of elegy, of loss, even of degenerative mimicry in the happy faces of the boy-warriors or the heraldic profiles of the village princes. I was polluting the afternoon with skeptical admiration. I misread an event through a visual echo of History—the cane fields, indenture, the evocation of vanished armies, temples, and trumpeting elephants—when all around me there was quite the opposite: elation, delight in the boys' screams, in the sweets-stalls, in more and more costumed characters appearing; a delight of conviction, not loss. The name Felicity made sense.

Consider the scale of Asia reduced to these fragments: the small white exclamations of minarets or the stone balls of temples in the cane fields, and one can understand the self-mockery and embarrassment of those who see these rites as parodic, even degenerate. These purists look on such ceremonies as grammarians look on a dialect, as cities look on provinces and empires on their colonies. Memory that yearns to join the center, a limb remembering the body from which it has been severed, like those bamboo thighs of the god. In other words, the way that the Caribbean is still looked at, illegitimate, rootless, mongrelized. "No people there," to quote Froude, "in the true sense of the word." No people. Fragments and echoes of real people, unoriginal and broken.

The performance was like a dialect, a branch of its original language, an abridgement of it, but not a distortion or even a reduction of its epic scale. Here in Trinidad I had discovered that one of the greatest epics of the world was seasonally performed, not with that desperate resignation of preserving a culture, but with an openness of belief that was as steady as the wind bending the cane lances of the Caroni plain. We had to leave before the play began to go through the creeks of the Caroni Swamp, to catch the scarlet ibises coming home at dusk. In a performance as natural as those of the actors of the *Ramleela*, we watched the flocks come in as bright as the scarlet of the boy archers, as the red flags, and cover an islet until it turned into a flowering tree, an anchored immortelle. The sigh of History meant nothing here. These two visions, the *Ramleela* and the arrowing flocks of scarlet ibises, blended into a single gasp of gratitude. Visual surprise is natural in

Derek Walcott has been awarded the Nobel Prize in literature for 1992. He is the author most recently of *Omeros* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

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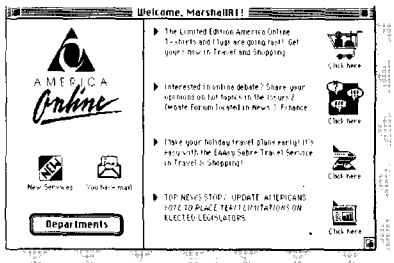

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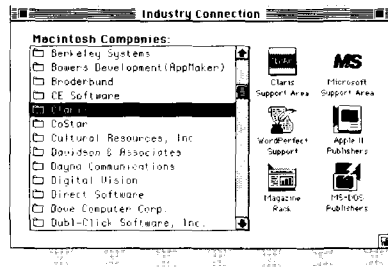

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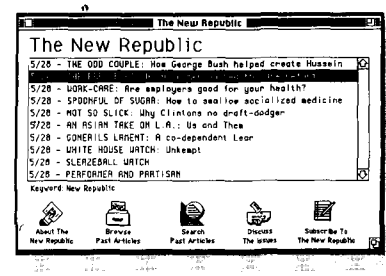
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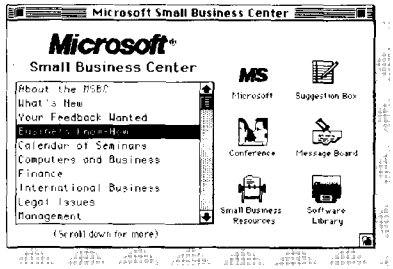

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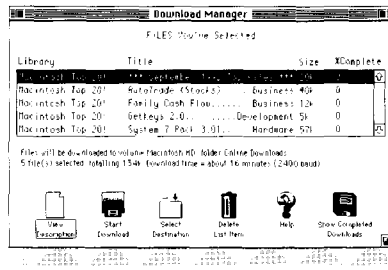

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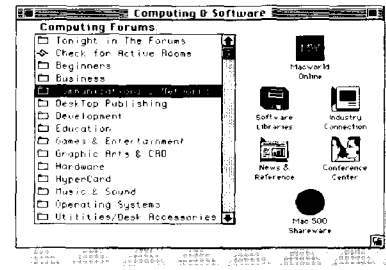

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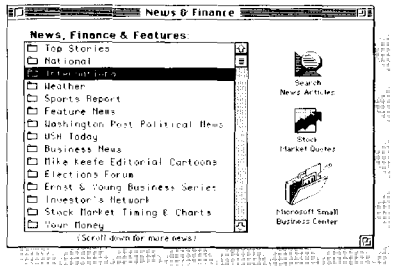

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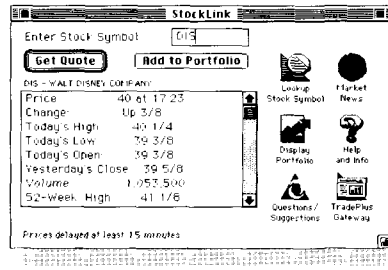

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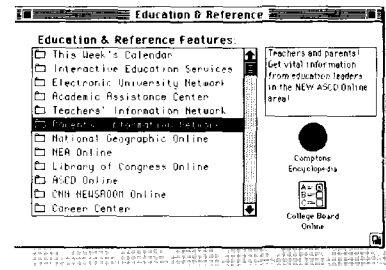

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the Caribbean; it comes with the landscape, and faced with its beauty, the sigh of History dissolves.

We make too much of that long groan that underlines the past. I felt privileged to discover the ibises as well as the scarlet archers of Felicity.

The sigh of History rises over ruins not over landscapes, and in the Antilles there are few ruins to sigh over, apart from the ruins of sugar estates and abandoned forts. Looking around slowly, as a camera would, taking in the low blue hills over Port of Spain, the village road and houses, the warrior-archers, the god-actors and their handlers, and music already on the sound track, I wanted to make a film that would be a long-drawn sigh over Felicity. I was filtering the afternoon with evocations of a lost India, but why "evocations"? Why not "celebrations of a real presence"? Why should India be "lost" when none of these villagers ever really knew it, and why not "continuing," why not the perpetuation of joy in Felicity and in all the other nouns of the Central Plain: Couva, Chaguanas, Charley Village? Why was I not letting my pleasure open its windows wide? I was entitled, like any Trinidadian, to the ecstasies of their claim, because ecstasy was the pitch of the sinuous drumming in the loudspeakers. I was entitled to the feast of Husein, to the mirrors and crepe-paper temples of the Muslim epic, to the Chinese Dragon Dance, to the rites of that Sephardic Jewish synagogue that was once on Something Street. I am only one-eighth the writer I might have been had I contained all the fragmented languages of Trinidad.

Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love that took its symmetry for granted when it was whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the sealing of its original shape. It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles, and if the pieces are disparate, ill-fitting, they contain more pain than their original sculpture, those icons and sacred vessels taken for granted in their ancestral places. Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent.

And this is the exact process of the making of poetry, or what should be called not its making but its remaking, the fragmented memory, the armature that frames the god, even the rite that surrenders it to a final pyre; the god assembled cane by cane, reed by weaving reed, line by plaited line, as the artisans of Felicity would erect his holy echo.

Poetry, which is perfection's sweat but which must seem as fresh as the raindrops on a statue's brow, combines the natural and the marmoreal. It conjugates both tenses simultaneously: the past and the present, if the past is the sculpture and the present the beads of dew or rain on the forehead of the past. There is the buried language and there is the individual vocabulary, and the process of poetry is one of excavation and self-discovery. Tonally the individual voice is a dialect; it shapes its own accent, its own vocabulary and melody in defiance of an imperial concept of language, the language of Ozymandias, libraries and dictionaries, law courts and critics, churches, universities, and political dogma, the diction of institutions. Poetry is an island that breaks away from the main. The dialects of my archipelago seem as fresh to me as those raindrops on the statue's forehead, not the sweat made from the classic exertion of frowning marble, but the contradictions of a refreshing element, rain and salt.

Deprived of their original language, the captured and indentured tribes create their own, accreting and secreting fragments of an old, epic vocabulary from Asia and from Africa, but to an ancestral and ecstatic rhythm in the blood that cannot be subdued by slavery or indenture, while nouns are renamed and the given names of places accepted like Felicity or Choiseul. The original language dissolves from the exhaustion of distance like fog trying to cross an ocean, but this process of renaming, of finding new metaphors, is the same process that the poet faces every morning of his working day, making his own tools like Crusoe, assembling nouns from necessity, from Felicity, even renaming himself. The stripped man is driven back to that self-astonishing elemental force, his mind. That is the basis of the Antillean experience, this shipwreck of fragments, these echoes, these shards of a huge tribal vocabulary, these partially remembered customs, and they are not decayed but strong. They survived the Middle Passage and the *Fatel Rozack*, the ship that carried the first indentured Indians from the port of Madras to the cane fields of Felicity, that carried the chained Cromwellian convict and the Sephardic Jew, the Chinese grocer and the Lebanese merchant selling cloth samples on his bicycle.

And here they are, all in a single Caribbean city, Port of Spain, the sum of history, Froude's "non-people." A downtown babel of shop signs and streets, mongrelized, polyglot, a ferment without a history, like heaven. Because that is what such a city is, in the New World, a writer's heaven.

A culture, we all know, is made by its cities.

Another first morning home, impatient for the sunrise—a broken sleep. Darkness at five, and the drapes not worth opening; then, in the sudden light, a cream-walled, brown-roofed police station bordered with short royal palms, in the colonial style, back of it frothing trees and taller palms, a pigeon fluttering into the cover of an eave, a rain-stained block of once-modern apartments, the morning side road into the station without traffic. All part of a surprising peace. This quiet happens with every visit to a city that has deepened itself in me. The flowers and the hills are easy, affection for them predictable; it is the architecture that, for the first morning, disorients. A return from American seductions used to make the traveler feel that something was missing, something was trying to complete itself, like the stained concrete apartments. Pan left along the window and the excrescences rear—a city trying to soar, trying to be brutal, like an American city in silhouette, stamped from the same mold as Columbus or Des Moines. An assertion of power, its decor bland, its air conditioning pitched to the point where its secretarial and executive staff sport competing cardigans; the colder the offices the more important, an imitation of another climate. A longing, even an envy of feeling cold.

In serious cities, in gray, militant winter with its short afternoons, the days seem to pass by in buttoned overcoats, every building appears as a barracks with lights on in its windows, and when snow comes, one has the illusion of living in a Russian novel, in the nineteenth century, because of the literature of winter. So visitors to the Caribbean must feel that they are inhabiting a succession of postcards. Both climates are shaped by what we have read of them. For tourists, the sunshine cannot be serious. Winter adds depth and darkness to life as well as to literature, and in the unending summer of the tropics not even poverty or poetry (in the Antilles poverty is poetry with a V, *une vie*, a condition of life as well as of imagination) seems capable of being profound, because the nature around it is so exultant, so resolutely ecstatic, like its music. A culture based on joy is bound to be shallow. Sadly, to sell itself, the Caribbean encourages the delights of mindlessness, or brilliant vacuity, as a place to flee not only winter but the seriousness that comes only out of culture with four seasons. So how can there be a people there, in the true sense of the word?

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They know nothing about seasons in which leaves let go of the year, in which spires fade in blizzards and streets whiten, of the erasures of whole cities by fog, of reflection in fireplaces. Instead, they inhabit a geography whose rhythm, like their music, is limited to two stresses: hot and wet, sun and rain, light and shadow, day and night, the limitations of an incomplete meter, and are therefore a people incapable of the subtleties of contradiction, of imaginative complexity. So be it. We cannot change contempt.

Ours are not cities in the accepted sense, but no one wants them to be. They dictate their own proportions, their own definitions in particular places and in a prose equal to that of their detractors, so that now it is not just St. James, but the streets and yards that Naipaul commemorates, its lanes as short and brilliant as his sentences; not just the noise and jostle of Tunapuna, but the origins of C. L. R. James's *Beyond a Boundary*; not just Felicity village on the Caroni plain, but Selvon Country, and that is the way it goes up the islands now: the old Dominica of Jean Rhys still very much the way she wrote of it; the Martinique of the early Césaire; Perse's Guadeloupe, even without the pith helmets and the mules; and what delight and privilege there was in watching a literature—one literature in several imperial languages, French, English, Spanish—bud and open island after island in the early morning of a culture, not timid, not derivative, any more than the hard white petals of the frangipani are derivative and timid. This is not a belligerent boast, but a simple celebration of inevitability: that this flowering had to come.

On a heat-stoned afternoon in Port of Spain, some alley white with glare, with love vine spilling over a fence, palms and a hazed mountain appear around a corner to the evocation of Vaughn or Herbert's "that shady city of palm-trees," or to the memory of a Hammond organ from a wooden chapel in Castries, where the congregation sang "Jerusalem the Golden." It is hard for me to see such emptiness as desolation. It is this patience that is the width of Antillean life, and the secret is not to ask the wrong thing of it, not to demand of it an ambition it has no interest in. The traveler reads this as lethargy, as torpor.

Here there are not enough books, one says, no theaters, no museums, simply not enough to do. Yet deprived of books, a man must fall back on thought, and out of thought, if he can learn to order it, will come the urge to record, and in extremity, if he has not means of recording, recitation, the ordering of memory that leads to meter, to commemoration. There can be virtues in deprivation, and certainly one virtue is salvation from a cascade of high mediocrity, since books are now not so much created as remade.

Cities create a culture, and all we have are these magnified market towns, so what are the proportions of the ideal Caribbean city? A surrounding, accessible countryside with leafy suburbs, and if the city is lucky, behind it, spacious plains. Behind it, fine mountains; before it, an indigo sea. Spires would pin its center and around them would be leafy, shadowy parks. Pigeons would cross its sky in alphabetic patterns, carrying with them memories of a belief in augury, and at the heart of the city there would be horses, yes, horses, those animals last seen at the end of the nineteenth century drawing broughams and carriages with top-hatted citizens, horses that live in the present tense without elegiac echoes from their hooves, emerging from paddocks at the Queen's Park Savannah at sunrise, when mist is unthreading from the cool mountains above the roofs, and at the center of the city seasonally there would be races, so that citizens could roar at the speed and grace of these nineteenth-century animals. Its docks would not be obscured by

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With a foreword by
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smoke or deafened by too much machinery, and above all, it would be so racially various that the cultures of the world—the Asiatic, the Mediterranean, the European, the African—would be represented in it, its humane variety more exciting than Joyce's Dublin. Its citizens would intermarry as they chose, from instinct, not tradition, until their children find it increasingly futile to trace their genealogy. It would not have too many avenues difficult or dangerous for pedestrians, its mercantile area would be a cacophony of accents, fragments of the old language that would be silenced immediately at 5 o'clock, its docks resolutely vacant on Sundays.

This is Port of Spain to me, a city ideal in its commercial and human proportions, where a citizen is a walker and not a pedestrian, and this is how Athens may have been before it became a cultural echo.

The finest silhouettes of Port of Spain are idealizations of the craftsman's handiwork, not of concrete and glass, but of baroque woodwork, each fantasy looking more like an involved drawing of itself than the actual building. Behind the city is the Caroni plain, with its villages, Indian prayer flags, and fruit vendors' stalls along the highway over which ibises come like floating flags. Photogenic poverty! Postcard sadnesses! I am not re-creating Eden; I mean, by "the Antilles," the reality of light, of work, of survival. I mean a house on the side of a country road, I mean the Caribbean Sea, whose smell is the smell of refreshing possibility as well as survival. Survival is the triumph of stubbornness, and spiritual stubbornness, a sublime stupidity, is what makes the occupation of poetry endure, when there are so many things that should make it futile. Those things added together can go under one collective noun: "the world."

This is the visible poetry of the Antilles, then. Survival.

If you wish to understand that consoling pity with which the islands were regarded, look at the tinted engravings of Antillean forests, with their proper palm trees, ferns, and waterfalls. They have a civilizing decency, like Botanical Gardens, as if the sky were a glass ceiling under which a colonized vegetation is arranged for quiet walks and carriage rides. Those views are incised with a pathos that guides the engraver's tool and the topographer's pencil, and it is this pathos that, tenderly ironic, gave villages names like Felicity. A century looked at a landscape furious with vegetation in the wrong light and with the wrong eye. It is such pictures that are saddening, rather than the tropics themselves. These delicate engravings of sugar mills and harbors, of native women in costume, are seen as a part of History, that History which looked over the shoulder of the engraver and, later, the photographer. History can alter the eye and the moving hand to conform a view of itself; it can rename places for the nostalgia in an echo; it can temper the glare of tropical light to elegiac monotony in prose, the tone of judgment in Conrad, in the travel journals of Froude.

These travelers carried with them the infection of their own malaise, and their prose reduced even the landscape to melancholia and self-contempt. Every endeavor is belittled as imitation, from architecture to music. There was this conviction in Froude that since History is based on achievement, and since the history of the Antilles was so genetically corrupt, so depressing in its cycles of massacres, slavery, and indenture, a culture was inconceivable, and nothing could ever be created in those ramshackle ports, those monotonously feudal sugar estates. Not only the light and salt of Antillean mountains defied this, but the demotic vigor and variety of their inhabitants. Stand close to a waterfall and you will stop hearing its roar. To be still in the nineteenth century, like horses, as Brodsky has written, may not be such a bad deal, and much of our life in the Antilles still seems to be in the rhythm of the last century, like the West Indian novel.

By writers even as refreshing as Graham Greene, the Caribbean is looked at with elegiac pathos, as prolonged sadness to which Lévi-Strauss supplied an epigraph: *Tristes Tropiques.* Their *tristesse* derives from an attitude to the Caribbean dusk, to rain, to uncontrollable vegetation, to the provincial ambition of Caribbean cities where brutal replicas of modern architecture dwarf the small houses and streets. The mood is understandable, the melancholy as contagious as the fever of a sunset, like the gold fronds of diseased coconut palms, but there is something alien and ultimately wrong in the way such a sadness, even a morbidity, is described by English, French, or some of our exiled writers. It relates to a misunderstanding of the light and the people on whom the light falls.

These writers describe the ambitions of our unfinished cities, their unrealized, homiletic conclusion, but the Caribbean city may conclude just at that point where it is satisfied with its own scale, just as Caribbean culture is not evolving but already shaped. Its proportions are not to be measured by the traveler or the exile, but by its own citizenry and architecture. To be told that you are not yet a city or a culture requires this response: I am not your city or your culture. There might be less *tristes tropiques* after that.

Here, on the raft of this dais, there is the sound of the applauding surf: our landscape, our history recognized, "at last." *At Last* is one of the first Caribbean books. It was written by the Victorian traveler Charles Kingsley. It is one of the earliest books to admit the Antillean landscape and its figures into English literature. I have never read it, but I gather that its tone is benign. The Antillean archipelago was there to be written about, not to write itself, by Froude, by Patrick Leigh-Fermor, in the very tone in which I almost wrote about the village spectacle at Felicity, as a compassionate and beguiled outsider, distancing myself from Felicity village even while I was enjoying it.

What is hidden cannot be loved. The traveler cannot love, since love is stasis and travel is motion. If he returns to what he loved in a landscape and stays there, he is no longer a traveler but in stasis and concentration, a lover of that particular part of earth, a native. So many people say that they "love the Caribbean," meaning that someday they plan to return for a visit but could never live there, the usual benign insult of the traveler, the tourist. These travelers, at their kindest, were devoted to the same patronage, the islands passing in profile, their vegetal luxury, their backwardness and poverty. Victorian prose dignified them. They passed by in beautiful profiles and were forgotten, like a vacation.

Alexis Saint-Léger Léger, whose writer's name is St.-John Perse, was the first Antillean to win this prize for poetry. He was born in Guadeloupe and wrote in French, but before him there was nothing as fresh and clear in feeling as those poems of his childhood, that of a privileged white child on an Antillean plantation, *Pour fêter une enfance, Éloges,* and later *Images à Crusoe.* At last, the first breeze on the page, salt-edged and self-renewing as the trade winds, the sound of pages and palm trees turning as "the odour of coffee ascends the stairs."

Caribbean genius is condemned to contradict itself. To celebrate Perse, we might be told, is to celebrate the old plantation system, to celebrate the *bequé*, or plantation rider, verandas and mulatto servants, a white French language in a white pith helmet, to celebrate a rhetoric of patronage and hauteur; and even if Perse denied his origins, great writers often have this folly of trying to smother their source, we cannot deny him any more than we can

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deny the African Aimé Césaire. This is not accommodation, this is the ironic republic that is poetry, since, when I see cabbage palms moving their fronds at sunrise, I think they are reciting Perse.

The fragrant and privileged poetry that Perse composed to celebrate his white childhood and the recorded Indian music behind the brown young archers of Felicity, with the same cabbage palms against the same Antillean sky, pierce me equally. I feel the same poignancy of pride in the poems as in the faces. Why, given the history of the Antilles, should this be remarkable? The history of the world, by which of course we mean Europe, is a record of intertribal lacerations, of ethnic cleansings. At last, islands not written about but writing themselves! The palms and the Muslim minarets are our Antillean exclamations. At last! The royal palms of Guadeloupe recite *Éloges* by heart.

Later, in *Anabase,* Perse assembled fragments of an imaginary epic, with the clicking teeth of frontier gates, barren wadis with the froth of poisonous lakes, horsemen burnoosed in sandstorms, the opposite of cool Caribbean mornings, yet not necessarily a contrast any more than some young brown archer at Felicity, hearing the sacred text blared across the flagged field, with its battles and elephants and monkey-gods, is a contrast to the white child in Guadeloupe assembling fragments of his own epic from the lances of the cane fields, the estate carts and oxen, and the calligraphy of bamboo leaves from the ancient languages, Hindi, Chinese, and Arabic, on the Antillean sky. From the *Ramayana* to Anabasis, from Guadeloupe to Trinidad, all that archaeology of fragments lying around, from the broken African kingdoms, from the crevasses of Canton, from Syria and Lebanon, vibrating not under the earth but in our raucous, demotic streets.

A boy with weak eyes skims a flat stone across the flat water of an Aegean inlet, and that ordinary action with the scything elbow contains the skipping lines of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* and another child aims a bamboo arrow at a village festival, another hears the rustling march of cabbage palms in a Caribbean sunrise, and from that sound, with its fragments of tribal myth, the compact expedition of Perse's epic is launched, centuries and archipelagos apart. For every poet it is always morning in the world, and History a forgotten insomniac night. History and elemental awe are always our early beginning, because the fate of poetry is to fall in love with the world in spite of History.

There is a force of exultation, a celebration of luck, when a writer finds himself a witness to the early morning of a culture that is defining itself, branch by branch, leaf by leaf, in that self-defining dawn, which is why, especially at the edge of the sea, it is good to make a ritual of the sunrise. Then the noun "Antilles" ripples like brightening water, and the sounds of leaves, palm fronds, and birds are the sounds of a fresh dialect, the native tongue. The personal vocabulary, the individual melody whose meter is one's biography, joins in that sound, with any luck, and the body moves like a walking, a waking island.

This is the benediction that is celebrated, a fresh language and a fresh people, and this is the frightening duty owed.

I stand here in their name, if not their image—but also in the name of the dialect they exchange like the leaves of the trees whose names are suppler, greener, more morning-stirred than English—*laurier canelles, bois-flot, bois-canot*—or the valleys the trees mention—Fond St. Jacques, Mabonya, Forestière, Roseau, Mahaut—or the empty beaches—L'Anse Ivrogne, Case en Bas, Paradis—all songs and histories in themselves, pronounced not

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in French but in patois.

One rose hearing two languages, one of the trees, one of schoolchildren reciting in English:

> I am monarch of all I survey,
> My right there is none to dispute;
> From the center all round to the sea
> I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
> Oh, solitude! Where are the charms
> That sages have seen in thy face?
> Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
> Than reign in this horrible place . . .

While in the country, to the same meter but to organic instruments, handmade violin, chac-chac, and goatskin drum, a girl named Sesenne singing:

> *Si mwen di 'ous ça fait mwen la peine*
> *'Ous kai dire ça vrai.*
> (If I told you that caused me pain
> You'll say, "It's true.")
> *Si mwen di 'ous ça penetrait mwen*
> *'Ous peut dire ça vrai.*
> (If I told you you pierced my heart
> You'd say, "It's true.")
> *Ces mamailles actuellement*
> *Pas ka faire l'amour z'autres pour un rien.*
> (Children nowadays
> Don't make love for nothing.)

It is not that History is obliterated by this sunrise. It is there in Antillean geography, in the vegetation itself. The sea sighs with the drowned from the Middle Passage, the butchery of its aborigines, Carib and Aruac and Taino, bleeds in the scarlet of the immortelle, and even the actions of surf on sand cannot erase the African memory, or the lances of cane as a green prison where indentured Asians, the ancestors of Felicity, are still serving time.

That is what I have read around me from boyhood, from the beginnings of poetry, the grace of effort. In the hard mahogany of woodcutters' faces, resinous men, charcoal burners; in a man with a cutlass cradled across his forearm, who stands on the verge with the usual anonymous khaki dog; in the extra clothes he put on this morning, when it was cold when he rose in the thinning dark to go and make his garden in the heights—the heights, the garden, being miles away from his house, but that is where he has his land—not to mention the fishermen, the footmen on trucks, groaning up mornes, all fragments of Africa originally but shaped and hardened and rooted now in the island's life, illiterate in the way leaves are illiterate; they do not read, they are there to be read, and if they are properly read, they create their own literature.

But in our tourist brochures the Caribbean is a blue pool into which the republic dangles the extended foot of Florida as inflated rubber islands bob and drinks with umbrellas float toward her on a raft. This is how the islands, from the shame of necessity, sell themselves; this is the seasonal erosion of their identity, that high-pitched repetition of the same images of service that cannot distinguish one island from the other, with a future of polluted marinas, land deals negotiated by ministers, and all of this conducted to music of Happy Hour and the rictus of a smile. What is the earthly paradise for our visitors? Two weeks without rain and a mahogany tan, and at sunset local troubadours in straw hats and floral shirts beating "Yellow Bird" and "Banana Boat Song" to death.

There is a territory wider than this—wider than the limits made by the map of an island—which is the illimitable sea and what it remembers. All of the Antilles, every island, is an effort of memory; every mind, every racial biography culminating in amnesia and fog. Pieces of sunlight through the fog and sudden rainbows, *arcs-en-ciel*. That is the effort, the labor of the Antillean imagination, rebuilding its gods from bamboo frames, phrase by phrase.

Decimation from the Aruac downward is the blasted root of Antillean history, and the benign blight that is tourism can infect all of those island nations, not gradually but with imperceptible speed, until each rock is whitened by the guano of white-winged hotels, the arc and descent of progress.

Before it is all gone, before only a few valleys are left, pockets of an older life, before development turns every artist into an anthropologist or a folklorist, there are still cherishable places, little valleys that do not echo with ideas, a simplicity of rebeginnings, not yet corrupted by the dangers of change. Not nostalgic sites but occluded sanctities as common and simple as their sunlight. Places as threatened by this prose as a headland is by the bulldozer or a sea-almond grove by the surveyor's string, or from blight, the mountain laurel.

One last epiphany: a basic stone church in a thick valley outside Soufrière, the hills almost shoving the houses around into a brown river, a sunlight that looks oily on the leaves, a backward place, unimportant, and one now being corrupted into significance by this prose. The idea is not to hallow or invest the place with anything, not even memory. African children in Sunday frocks come down the ordinary concrete steps into the church, banana leaves hang and glisten, a truck is parked in a yard, and old women totter toward the entrance. Here is where a real fresco should be painted, one without importance, but one with real faith, mapless, Historyless.

How quickly it could all disappear! And how it is beginning to drive us further into where we hope are impenetrable places, green secrets at the end of bad roads, headlands where the next view is not of a hotel but of some long beach without a figure and the hanging question of some fisherman's smoke at its far end. The Caribbean is not an idyll, not to its natives. They draw their working strength from it organically, like trees, like the sea almond or the spice laurel of the heights. Its peasantry and its fishermen are not there to be loved or even photographed; they are trees who sweat, and whose bark is filmed with salt. But every day on some island, rootless trees in suits are signing favorable tax breaks with entrepreneurs, poisoning the sea almond and the spice laurel of the mountains to their roots. A morning could come in which governments might ask what happened not merely to the forests and the bays, but to a whole people.

They are here again, they recur, the faces, corruptible angels, smooth black skins and white eyes huge with an alarming joy, like those of the Asian children of Felicity at *Ramleela*; two different religions, two different continents, both filling the heart with the pain that is joy.

But what is joy without fear? The fear of selfishness that, here on this podium with the world paying attention not to them but to me, I should like to keep these simple joys inviolate, not because they are innocent, but because they are true. They are as true as when, in the grace of this gift, Perse heard the fragments of his own epic of Asia Minor in the rustling of cabbage palms, that inner Asia of the soul through which imagination wanders, if there is such a thing as imagination as opposed to the collective memory of our entire race, as true as the delight of that warrior-child who flew a bamboo arrow over the flags in the field at Felicity; and now as grateful a joy and a blessed fear as when a boy opened an exercise book and, within the discipline of its margins, framed stanzas that might contain the light of the hills on an island blessed by obscurity, cherishing our insignificance.

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The Art of the Streets

By Luc Sante

Pasolini Requiem
by Barth David Schwartz

(Pantheon, 785 pp., $35)

A Violent Life
by Pier Paolo Pasolini

(Pantheon, 320 pp., $13 paper)

On the dust jacket of Barth David Schwartz's biography, Pier Paolo Pasolini stares out from behind thick-framed, masklike eyeglasses; the rest of his face is stripped to essentials, flesh stretched over bone. It is a handsome face, but at the same time daunting, the face of someone absolutely unwilling to make accommodations. And the more of him that Schwartz reveals, the further Pasolini recedes, the more he seems unassimilable, intractable, remote. This is despite a career of soul-searching conducted in public through his poetry, fiction, films, essays, newspaper columns, and polemics, and despite the more than 700 pages of meticulous detail presented by Schwartz in his unswerving, deeply felt, even obsessive biography.

But then such an impression would probably not displease Pasolini. He was a restless and uncomfortable thinker and artist who fought hard against categorization, as well as a master contrarian given to executing dramatic volte-faces at regular intervals, to the point where his inconsistencies became a kind of consistency. For American audiences there is also a problem of context. Postwar Italy, with its alternatives of Catholicism and communism, jet-set luxury and unaltered feudal blight, hedonistic self-absorption and ideological hermeticism, is available to our understanding as a set of binary absolutes, but we ignore the large and infinitely more perplexing gray areas that link them, which is where Pasolini spent his life and career. Americans may also find it difficult, especially these days, to comprehend fully the position of a public intellectual working in a fish bowl society where every published sneeze becomes a matter for debate.

Pasolini is known in this country more for his movies than for his writings, and now he is probably best known for his murder. This would very likely be the case for any artist who met a violent end: murder is always big news, and it retroactively colors the life and works that preceded it. In Pasolini's case it seems both exceptionally preordained and gratuitously symmetrical, the kind of ending that would seem altogether too convenient in a novel or a movie. He seems to have been murdered by a Roman street kid in the course of a sexual encounter, but even today there remain questions about the exact means of killing and the number of people involved. This last was a significant point for more than forensic reasons: a right-wing conspiracy was immediately suspected by some of Pasolini's friends and supporters, and such a thing would not have been at all unlikely in Italy in 1975, a time dense with political bombings and assassinations.

Then, too, Pasolini never made a secret of his sexual inclination, and he probably couldn't have even if he had wanted to, since he was exclusively attracted to lumpenproletarian teenagers he met in public places. The risks were overwhelming, whether or not they were part of the attraction, and public exposure was the very least of them. In the fall of 1949, four boys ranging in age from 14 to 16 told the police that Pasolini had lured them into a field near the carnival at a place called Ramuscello, in Pasolini's native province of Friulia, and had induced them to masturbate him. Although formal charges remained unresolved and were ultimately dropped, Pasolini was expelled from the Communist Party and stripped of his teaching post. He and his mother went into self-exile in Rome, where they would remain for the rest of their lives. Pasolini, who was then 27, was beginning to achieve a certain renown as a poet and a political agitator, so the news of his downfall traveled far and fast. Similar incidents were to occur later, none of them with any concrete legal results and all of them in circumstances that suggested entrapment, just as the Ramuscello matter may have been manipulated by a priest active in the Christian Democratic Party.

Pasolini's politics and sexuality were linked together more or less explicitly. It would seem that in both cases—though less in his homosexuality than in his endlessly renewable desire for non-bourgeois youth, and less in his communism than in the instinctive and sometimes undigested populism that lay behind it—he was guided by a romantic longing for a premodern Arcadia in which the animal and sensual components of human nature could run loose, free from institutions. And yet he conducted his professional and very public career in an atmosphere entirely dominated by institutions, from the petty business of literary cadres and prize juries to the behemoths of Church and Party, and he dealt with them by enthusiastic politicking and alliance-shifting. He was temperamentally both an extreme outsider and a fluid, sophisticated insider. There was no way for him to synthesize these two strains; he could only commute between them.

His family background was almost unbearably classic. His mother, who came from a line of risen peasants, was close, encouraging, seductive; his father, from minor noble stock, was a rigid and distant career military officer and eventually a dedicated Fascist. Pasolini, who later made a film of *Oedipus Rex* that featured a prologue in which his parents and childhood were literally depicted, hewed to the Freudian template. He resented his father and—after the old man had been crippled by war injuries and broken by defeat—employed him as secretary and clipping service. He cleaved to his mother, and the two shared an apartment in Rome to the end.

Pasolini seems to have passed the war years about as aloof from the turmoil as could be managed in that time and place. He devoted himself to his studies and to the pursuit, artistic and scholarly, of poetry in the Friulian dialect, a tongue not spoken by anyone in his family but one that represented for him a justifiable form of escapism. He wrote poetry, collaborated on campus literary journals, made grand pronouncements on the role of intellectuals, and fell in love with peasant boys. In early 1945, after Mussolini's government had fallen and the country fragmented in local guerrilla wars, Pasolini's younger brother, Guidalberto, who had joined a republican partisan outfit, was captured and executed by Communist partisans. His death made a deep and lasting impression on Pasolini,

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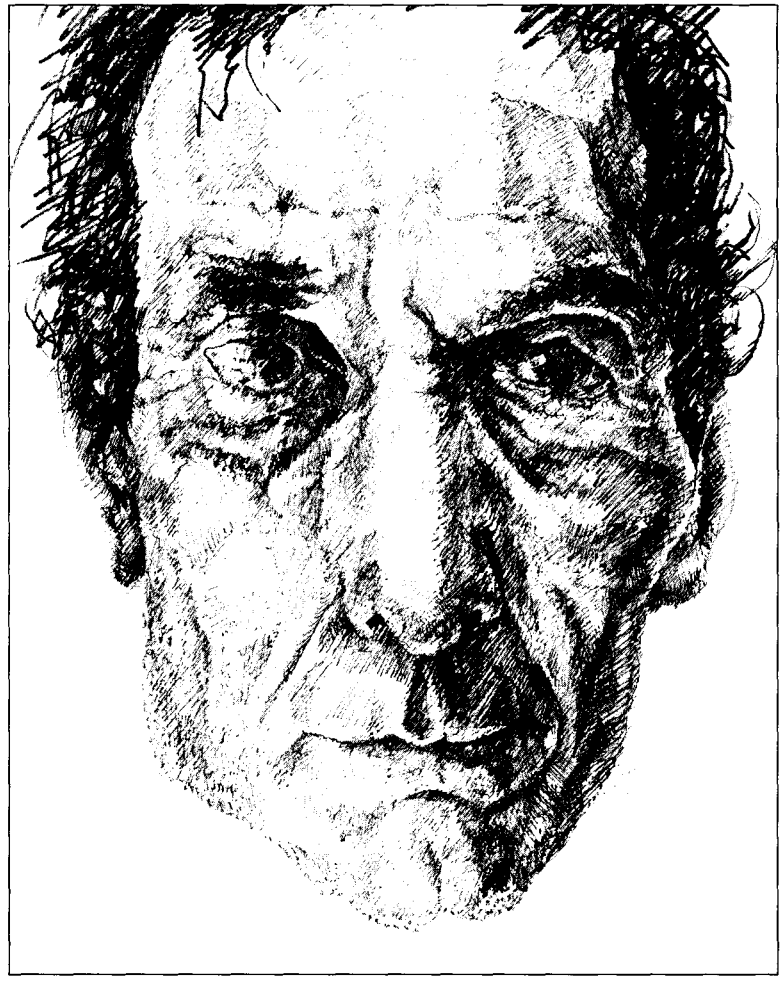
but it did not prevent him from adhering to the Communist cause. This was probably far less perplexing in the postwar confusion of meanings and creeds than it might seem to us now.

When hostilities ended, Pasolini was a village schoolmaster, a job he loved and one he might conceivably have held for the rest of his life. He was also becoming a literary operator, and here his biography becomes a welter of reviews, manifestos, prizes, letters, feuds, anthologies, connections, and assorted controversies that does not stop until the end of the book, which is to say, until some point beyond his death. The small world of the Italian intelligentsia bristled with activity, and Pasolini was preternaturally energetic, with results that can be exhausting to read about. Schwartz is a conscientious and zealous biographer, and he does not spare the reader an iota of all this, though he might perhaps have included a dramatis personae in his apparatus to guide nonspecialists through the logjam of last names, some of which are familiar (Moravia, Morante, Montale, Calvino, Gadda) but many others not.

Although Pasolini led a blissful existence in his rustic province, his banishment to Rome was so fortunate a spur for him that he might as well have planned it. Rome not only put him at the center of the country, it also presented him with a new and much larger subproletarian culture to draw on, complete with its boys, its dialect, and its political example. Pasolini spent several years living in semimisery, part of that time in a *borgata*, one of the bidonvilles on the city's outskirts, and he quickly developed a fierce loyalty to that world and its people. The contrast in Friulia between his mother's hearth and the surrounding countryside had not been so marked, but now he was divided between the slums and the various strata of the literary world. As his fame increased and his fortunes grew, this contrast sometimes tilted toward the grotesque, as in his later years, when the cheap flashy clothes and expensive flashy cars he affected for the benefit of the street kids stood out glaringly on the other side of his life. But the *borgate* had provided him with the subject that made his fame. His two mature novels, *Ragazzi di vita* ("boys of life," more or less), which appeared in 1955, and *A Violent Life*, which appeared four years later, are neorealist animations of that world.

The latter, just reprinted in English, is the convincing and unsentimental chronicle of a boy named Tommasso Puzzilli, whose family escaped to Rome in the chaos at the end of the war and promptly became mired in a misery that differed from their former condition only in giving them occasional glimpses of what they lacked. Tommasso does not have many resources to draw upon and he does not develop much, until the end of the book, when he performs an act of heroism that hastens his death from tuberculosis. The book is interesting for the way in which its narrative direction seems to come simultaneously from Tommasso's consciousness and from just outside it. The episodic early chapters, for example, have consequences that don't really register except apparently by accident: Tommasso and a boy named Lello, after a long binge of drunkenness and crime and whoring, are on their way home when Lello somehow misses his footing getting on the tram and winds up with a hand and a foot mashed into pulp. Tommasso, shaken by the sight, does nothing. Lello disappears from the story as he would from Tommasso's mind, and only reappears chapters later as a beggar seen on the street.

The complexity of Pasolini's response to his subject results in a richer texture than might be expected from such a parched storyline. The kids are hardly ennobled, but they are sympathetically understood; they are sexually alive but also sometimes repellent; they are animals (there is a long list of zoological similes) but they have souls and minds. We are shown the political and moral lessons they are given and the ways in which they fail to understand them, as well as the very roundabout ways in which they do change. It is an impressive performance, not least for the cinematic qualities of setting and motion, which Pasolini later transferred intact to his movies.



PIER PAOLO PASOLINI BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The only major problem with the book is its translation, which is surprising since it is by William Weaver, inarguably the greatest living translator from Italian. In fact the literary prose in the book is very well rendered. The difficulties arise in the slang dialogue, which is awkward and very dated, like the Dead End Kids translated into a foreign language and then back again. (People say things like "what the shit," and insultingly call each other "you nuts.")

Translation problems also seem to dog an appreciation of Pasolini's poetry. The several available editions in English, which Schwartz quotes, account for some of Pasolini's grandeur in that medium, but they leave the reader with a sense of something missing, as if looking at a painting through a scrim. For example, "The Ashes of Gramcsi" (1957), his soliloquy at the grave of the Italian Marxist theorist (who was buried by the Fascists out of spite in the English Protestant cemetery), includes these significant lines in the translation by Norman McAfee:

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The scandal of contradicting myself, of being
with you and against you; with you in my heart,
in light, but against you in the dark viscera;
traitor to my paternal state
—in my thoughts, in the shadows of action—
I know I am attached to it, in the heat
of the instincts and aesthetic passion;
attracted to a proletarian life
that preceded you; for me it is a religion,
its joy, not its millennial
struggle; its nature, not its
consciousness.

Somehow this comes out sounding like a tract scissored up, and yet the difficulty of the thought and the honesty of the emotion, once they are decoded, argue against such an opaque presentation. On the other hand, most of the other citations from Pasolini's works that appear in Schwartz's book, whether from poems or interviews, speeches or newspaper columns, suffer from similarly tortured syntax, uncertain idiom, and leaden rhythms. A reader not adept in Italian is forced to wonder whether Pasolini was simply one of those writers sunk so deep in the peculiarities of their language that they cannot be effectively translated, or a bluntly awkward writer whose work was valued strictly for the force of its content. Given his various assertions of pride regarding his own style, the latter possibility seems dubious.

Besides his poems and his novels, various anthologies, proclamations, and prefaces, and newspaper columns in which he used the pretext of readers' letters to discuss whatever crossed his mind, Pasolini by the late 1950s was also writing for the movies. He was initially hired as a local-color and dialect specialist. He soon gathered respect and more work, and grew sufficiently certain of his abilities that he was able to make his debut as a director, in 1961, with *Accattone*, a neorealist movie that followed his novels in a smooth continuity of style and theme. Pasolini was born to be a neorealist, but his continuing in this course was defeated both by the flagging commercial possibilities of a style that had reached its apex of popularity in the early 1950s and by the size of his own ambition. For all the complexity of his thought, simplicity suited him best as a narrative strategy. What is strongest in his films lies closest to the core, as demonstrated by his understated and pliable *Gospel According to Matthew* (1964; the word "Saint" was inserted into the English title against his wishes) and most of the "Trilogy of Life" he made in the early 1970s (*The Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The 1001 Nights*).

His less straightforward movies are often more theoretically interesting than enjoyable or artistically successful. In *Hawks and Sparrows* (1966), for example, it was probably a piquant idea for him to set the venerable comedian Totò on a Chaplinesque endless road, accompanied both by Pasolini's great love Ninetto Davoli (who is a charming screen personality, in spite of a total lack of experience) and by a crow who is made to speak in the persona of the lately deceased Italian Communist Party leader Palmiro Togliatti; and it probably seemed a portentous twist that in the course of their walk they should, among other things, act out a fable set in the thirteenth century and eventually kill and eat the crow. Still, the film is neither much fun nor terribly enlightening.

And there is *Teorema* (1968), his first hit stateside, in which Terence Stamp mysteriously appears at the villa of an industrialist and proceeds to enjoy carnal relations with every member of the family including the maid. He then leaves just as mysteriously, abandoning each of them to their various excessive fates of despair or exaltation, and it all adds up to the kind of diagrammatic monochrome that gave European art-cinema a bad name. But then there is *Salò* (1975), his setting of Sade's *120 Days of Sodom* in the last days of Mussolini's shrunken republic, which is a genuinely disturbing film, whether or not its intended political allegory carries

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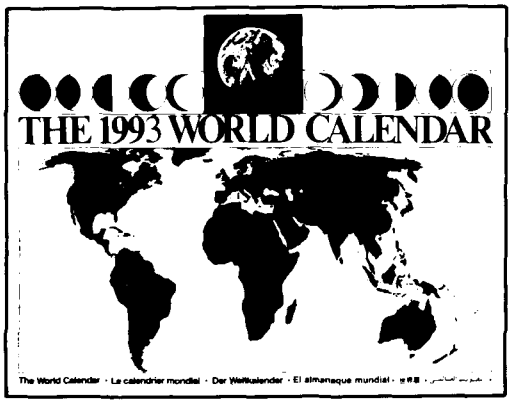

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any weight. It wound up being Pasolini's last movie, and in the cold lack of affect with which it details its scenes of appalling cruelty, it possesses an air of finality that would have been difficult to top, although when he died Pasolini had been planning a film about the life of Saint Paul.

Through Schwartz's chronicle we learn that during all these films Pasolini fought battle after battle. They were not the expected fights with financiers and producers, but a daunting series of legal ones, over charges of obscenity or blasphemy, most of them instigated by citizens who appear to have viewed the pictures for the express purpose of lodging complaints against them. In all, he was cited on morals charges on the basis of his works thirty-three times, beginning with the novel *Ragazzi di vita.* The reasons undoubtedly stemmed from matters greater than merely the provocations inherent in the works themselves. He was attacked by the right and the Church for obvious reasons, but even these were complicated. His *Gospel,* for example, was made with the blessings and counsel of prominent churchmen, and contained nothing that would offend the devout, but there were some who could not stomach religious themes being undertaken by a left-wing homosexual.

And although the Communist Party eventually staged his funeral, his relations with it in life were endlessly troubled. He was not a Party member. He had in fact been expelled; he held numerous heretical views, and he was a homosexual. But it seemed that Pasolini, not content with these basic difficulties, actively went in search of more. He came out against the students in 1968. (His reasoning was consistent: he saw the students as bourgeois and the cops as proletarian.) He argued against secondary education, television, and divorce, all in the name of what might be translated as "traditional values." It might appear that Pasolini was at war with the world and that he thrived on making enemies (in addition to these various controversies, he published sundry attacks on old friends and allies), and he was certainly abetted in this pursuit by being given an endless supply of public forums for his views. That he was offered these pulpits at all suggests that there was a certain marquee value attached to his name in the wake of his legal problems and their inevitable tabloid coverage. To American readers this might seem like a way to sell more tickets, but the cap doesn't quite fit Pasolini. He was animated by a genuine desire for truth, complicated by uncertainty, further complicated by rage.

Barth David Schwartz's biography sets out these paradoxes with admirable thoroughness. The book represents what must have been a ferocious act of will, pursuing an often frayed thread through the maze of Pasolini's personality. This same thoroughness might at the same time be the book's chief defect, since Schwartz apparently recorded everything he found, down to such items as the foreign publications of various works, which are nothing more than pebbles in the road. The book could have used more active editing than it apparently received; besides being diffuse and unwieldy at various points, it suffers from a prose style that sometimes reads like a literal translation of Italian idiom (and there are a host of typographical errors). But as the honest and complete chronicle of a mind challenging to every sort of assumption, *Pasolini Requiem* will stand definitively.

LUC SANTE is the author most recently of *Evidence* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

Enemies and Empires

BY GODFREY HODGSON

Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-71 by Douglas Brinkley

(Yale University Press, 429 pp., $35)

"When this pompous diplomat in striped pants, with the phony British accent, proclaimed to the American people that Christ on the Mount endorsed communism, high treason, and the betrayal of a sacred trust," said Joe McCarthy, "the blasphemy was so great that it awakened the dormant indignation of the American people." Senator Hugh Butler of Nebraska echoed the sentiment: "I look at that fellow, I watch his smart-aleck manner and his British clothes and that New Dealism in everything he says and does, and I want to shout, 'Get out! Get out! You stand for everything that has been wrong in the United States for years.'" And that other eminent Republican statesman, Senator William E. Jenner of Indiana, called him a "Communist-appeasing, Communist-protecting betrayer of America," one of the leaders of the "criminal crowd of traitors and Communist appeasers who ... are still selling America down the river."

The Republican right detested Dean Acheson as the incarnation of liberalism, and especially as the epitome of those who were soft on communism. Even after he had left office, John Foster Dulles blamed Acheson and his friend and boss Harry Truman for getting the United States into the Korean War, and pinned responsibility on Acheson for the "betrayal" of Yalta. And these were only stray shots in a drumfire of accusation. For years scarcely a day went by when Acheson was not accused of having delivered the United States and its allies, through soft-headed naïveté or culpable disloyalty, into the power of the Communist conspiracy.

There has never been a bummer rap. Though in human terms he sympathized with and even defended some who had been fellow travelers or even something worse, Acheson himself was always implacably anti-Communist. Nor was this merely a matter of attitude. As undersecretary of state between 1946 and 1948, Acheson was one of the prime movers behind the Truman Doctrine, the decisive commitment to replace Britain as the supporter of Greece and Turkey, and the Marshall Plan. At the decisive meeting with the leaders of Congress in February 1948, it was Acheson who warned that a Soviet victory in Greece "might open three continents to Soviet penetration." He likened the spread of communism to the corruption of apples in a barrel infected by a rotten one. It is hardly the language of a "com-symp." As secretary of state from 1949 to 1953, a post that he revealingly described in his memoirs as "active duty," the task to which he gave priority was the construction of the grand anti-Communist alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The years immediately after the end of World War II look in retrospect like a time of opportunity, when statesmen could fashion whole structures of international politics according to their own conceptions, where now they seem able only to whittle or to adjust. From our perspective, the leaders of that period, Churchill and de Gaulle, Adenauer and Monnet, Stalin and Mao, Roosevelt, Tru-

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man, Marshall, and Acheson, look like titans. Out of all of them Acheson, half a generation younger than the rest, saw most clearly what the interests of the United States and its allies required. He did the most to create the world that lasted from the advent of the cold war to the collapse of communism forty years later.

As a graduate student in Washington, Douglas Brinkley was introduced by chance to Alice Acheson, the secretary's widow, and he wrote a doctoral thesis on Acheson's role during the eighteen years of his life after he left the State Department in 1953. Now Brinkley has expanded the thesis into this important book. It is admiring, yet anything but uncritical. Brinkley, who sees Acheson as "one of the most imaginative, productive, and distinguished statesmen in America's history," describes how after he was supplanted at the State Department by Dulles, whom he detested, he "engineered his own resurrection as a major influence on American foreign policy." But he also frankly shows how Acheson's later years were "marred by growing egotism, accentuated by gay and reckless brilliance." And he contends that Acheson's unattractive characteristics, especially a habit of intemperate verbal assaults on those with whom he disagreed, were exacerbated by age and by resentment at the loss of power. It was certainly disobliging of him to say that "Dulles's people always seemed to me like Cossacks quartered in some grand city hall, burning the paneling to cook with"; and it was something worse when, shortly after Dulles's death of cancer, he silenced a dinner party by saying, "Thank God Foster is underground." He was hardly less scathing about others, Adlai Stevenson and George Kennan among them, who did not match up to his fierce and unremitting anti-communism.

If Acheson the secretary of state was the grand architect of the anti-Communist coalition, Acheson the elder statesman was even more zealous in his dedication to the cold war. After 1956 he became the foreign policy spokesman of the Democratic Advisory Council, and "the tune of the DAC song changed from a liberal, Stevensonian air to the cold war refrain heard in the Truman administration." He and his friend Paul Nitze fulminated about "the present danger," and accused Eisenhower and Dulles of being "soft on communism." In 1961, at the time of the Berlin crisis, Acheson called for a national emergency and an immediate buildup of both nuclear and conventional forces. In 1962 he advocated an air strike on the Soviet missiles in Cuba, and thought that President Kennedy missed a great opportunity in the missile crisis to punish the Soviet Union. He believed that the Soviet Union was "hell-bent" on supplanting British and American influence in the Middle East, and he used just as violent language about Willy Brandt and his Ostpolitik in the 1960s as he had used in the 1950s about Kennan and "disengagement," which he likened to appeasement of the Nazis.

It could be argued, I suppose, that Acheson's latter-day anti-communism was a pose, adopted as a protection against the charges flung at him like so many dead cats during the McCarthyite assault. But surely such an argument does not hold water. There is no discontinuity between Acheson's views about communism in office and out of it. When, after Stalin's death, it was suggested that the West could do business with Khrushchev and Bulganin as it could not with the old dictator, Acheson's response was that "the new Soviet leaders are as ruthless and dangerous as the old ones." The Republican charge that he was "soft on communism" was always nonsense. What is interesting is how such a charge came to be made, on which more later.

The true controversy, which will be more distressing to Acheson's admirers, lies in what Brinkley has unearthed about Acheson's Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward the end of colonialism. Senators McCarthy and Butler were offended by what seemed to them Acheson's British accent and British clothes respectively, and it is true that Acheson was the son of a Canadian who became the Episcopalian bishop of Connecticut and the grandson of a British army officer. It is also true that, like many British expatriates, he was airily contemptuous of postwar Britain. The most celebrated expression of this disdain was his remark, which he maintained was taken out of context but which nevertheless expressed his considered view, that Britain had "lost an empire and not yet found a role." (British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, characteristically sharp-tongued and characteristically unable to resist a cheap shot, told the House of Commons that Acheson was "a distinguished figure who had lost a State Department and not yet found himself a role.")

The historian Gaddis Smith has suggested shrewdly that what Acheson admired most about Britain was its empire. If so, he was no different from many fellow members of the American Establishment, whose attitude toward Britain oscillated between affectionate emulation and irritated rivalry, and who saw it as America's destiny to be the residual legatee of Britain's hegemony in the Middle East and elsewhere. Certainly, like most Americans of his generation, he did not understand that the majoritarian strand in British public life actually welcomed the end of empire, or that in Britain the critics of imperialism had held the high ground since Orwell's day. To ally yourself with the defenders of white Rhodesia's "unilateral declaration of independence," as Acheson did, was the equivalent in British terms of speaking up for the Confederacy, not to say the Klan.

Few anywhere made their contempt for anti-colonialism, and their sympathy for colonialism, as explicit as Acheson. At the time of the Suez crisis in 1956, he made his attitude unambiguously plain. "Not anti-colonialism," he said, "but maintaining strength and unity with the heart of the free world—Western Europe—was America's primary foreign policy objective." Acheson's irritation with the Eisenhower administration over the Suez crisis derived from his feeling that the United States ought not to side with a radical Third World government against old and important allies like Britain and France. It did not particularly focus on the fact that there was a third party to the coalition against Nasser: Israel. In fact Acheson had been opposed to the creation of the State of Israel in the first place. By 1957 he had accepted that Israel was a valuable ally in the Middle East, and right at the end of his life he lobbied in Washington against Secretary of State William Rogers's Middle East initiative on the grounds that it meant bringing Soviet influence and Soviet troops into the region. On the whole, however, he was relatively indifferent to Israel's needs and fears, and tended to see the Middle East not as the theater in which the drama of Israel's survival was being played out, but as the arena in which the United States was succeeding Britain and France as the hegemonic power.

With the uprising against the European empires Acheson had no sympathy whatever. In 1964 he said that "anti-colonialism is not a policy. It is merely an attitude of mind and not a very sensible one." He was scornful of the Adlai Stevenson-Chester Bowles wing of the Democratic Party, which sought to throw America's weight into the scales on the side of independence movements. Behind African struggles for freedom he saw only Soviet or Communist intrigue. He professed a "deep respect" for the Portuguese dictator Antonio Salazar, who was determined to fight for Portugal's empire, and therefore presumably had a role.

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But his irritation at what he saw as the Kennedy administration's sentimental willingness to go along with a United Nations investigation into violence in Angola was minor compared with his fury at the British government's use of the U.N. to impose sanctions on the white minority government that had declared its independence of Britain in Rhodesia. Brinkley correctly notes that Acheson was "infuriated at the outside interference with Smith's white, Christian, stable anti-Communist government." He does not point out that the Smith government was engaged in a war of suppression against the organizations representing the black majority as ruthless in its way, and almost as lethal in terms of proportionate casualties, as the French war in Algeria. (In 1957 Acheson sharply reproved the young Senator Kennedy for attacking France's conduct in Algeria.) In May 1968 he told the American Bar Association that the unilateral Rhodesian declaration of independence had the moral status of its American original, and he compared Britain's attempt to reassert sovereignty by non-violent means such as sanctions to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Perhaps most remarkable of all in its implications was Acheson's protest, in a memorandum in April 1969 to the Nixon White House, against the "subjugation of Rhodesia to majority rule."

Nor was Acheson's total lack of sympathy for the aspirations of the former colonial populations of Africa and Asia motivated only by his loyalty to the European powers that had been allies against Hitler and were now partners in NATO. He was scathing about Britain, telling Lord Angus Graham, the former Duke of Montrose, who was white Rhodesia's foreign minister, that he could not understand why the United States should "follow the stupid policy of a bewildered country [Britain] led by a third-rate prime minister [Wilson]." He was on terms of personal friendship with the white supremacists Sir Roy Welensky and Ian Smith, and showed no interest in the future black leaders of southern Africa.

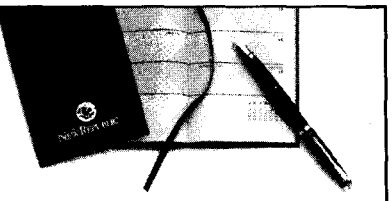
There is more than a hint in the texts and informal comments adduced by Brinkley that Acheson, who was no racist in his dealings with real individuals of different backgrounds, nevertheless saw the world—like so many of his WASP contemporaries—in terms of an unspoken but unquestioned racial hierarchy. "One of my prejudices," he admitted cheerfully, "is Indians.... They and their country give me the creeps." He called the U.N. an "international orphan asylum," and he frequently said that he believed that Africans were "wholly incompetent to manage their own affairs."

Too much, it will be objected, ought not to be made of these grouchy obiter dicta of a man whose career abundantly documents his commitment to democracy. But that is sentimentality. The best that can be said is that Acheson's career puts him within the rather generous limits of what passed for the American democratic tradition in his generation—a tradition that was quite compatible with a good deal of racial stereotyping and ethnic prejudice, and with a near-total indifference to the struggles for independence of the non-white majority in the former colonial empires and indeed in such American spheres of interest as Central America.

And even that is a little too kind to Acheson. After all, there were Democrats and democrats in America in his generation who were significantly more committed than he was to racial and social equality and to the struggle against colonialism, Eleanor Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, Chester Bowles, and John Kenneth Galbraith among them. The evidence is that Acheson despised them, or at best thought them pathetically soft-boiled. You may agree with him, but then you may not also denounce him as the epitome of liberalism. What can be said, rather, is that from 1945 to 1970 the American foreign policy establishment, of which Acheson was certainly the most brilliant exponent, focused to the exclusion of almost all else on the contest between communism and the West, and saw the South as important only in the context of that primary conflict. Acheson deserves great credit for the successes of that policy, and he must also take much responsibility for its limitations.

A corporate lawyer, wealthy, and proud of his association with the most prestigious private schools in the country, Acheson was a pillar of the established order. His foreign policy, founded as it was on the alignment of the United States with the powers of Western Europe, including Germany and the former colonial empires, against communism and also against the movements for radical change that communism supported in the world, was essentially conservative. How in the world, then, did the confusion occur in which Acheson and his friends were bludgeoned as the allies of communism by men who thought of themselves as conservatives?

The question is not just a historical curiosity. One of the most bizarre, and at the same time one of the most pervasive, political ideas of the last half-generation has been the identification between



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wealth and aristocracy on the one hand, and liberalism on the other. Acheson's tweeds, his waxed mustache, and the tone of his speech, conditioned by an Episcopalian rectory and by Groton to sound British to Midwestern ears, supply the clue.

Acheson was seen as a man of the left, as the epitome of "New Dealism," because the Eastern upper class was seen in the Midwest as foreign, as un-American. Of course, that wasn't why he was so savagely attacked. The Republican right had been waiting since 1933 for an opportunity to discredit the Democratic lock on the presidency. It saw its opportunity in the Chinese revolution in 1949 and in the charge that the Truman administration, with Acheson as its secretary of state, had "lost" China. To Midwestern and Western Republicans, it was all too plain that the Democrats had been giving priority to their friends in Europe, and especially to their British friends, when they should have been giving priority to China.

To a substantial degree, indeed, the whole quarrel between "isolationists" and "internationalists" had always been between Europe-firsters and Asia-firsters, with the disagreements embittered by sectional and ethnic suspicions. That explains, for example, how self-styled isolationists could become pillars of the China lobby, hot for activist policies in Asia. Acheson was the incarnation of the pro-British internationalist, and therefore was in the cross hairs. To be sure, there were upper-class Ivy League liberals in the New Deal, and in plenty. But they were overwhelmingly outnumbered in their own class by Republican conservatives, and in the New Deal by middle-class reformers, union people, and machine politicians. The equation that was made between the Eastern upper-class and radical ideas was absurd, even at the time. But it has influenced American politics ever since.

Brinkley's book is valuable, but not because it "debunks" Acheson's reputation. That is not Brinkley's intention, and in truth no one could do it. It is certainly not my aim here to diminish Acheson's stature as a secretary of state. I have focused at some length on the evidence Brinkley has dug up of Acheson's conservative and even reactionary attitudes in old age for two reasons. First, they remind us how far the attitudes of what might be called the American mainstream have moved in the direction of racial equality since Dean Acheson left Yale, indeed since he left the Department of State. And second, this new perspective makes his critics seem even more unfair and plain wrong than they did before.

With all his faults, Acheson remains head and shoulders above all other secretaries of state in this century. Almost alone of the statesmen of his time, he had a clear conception of what the interests of the United States required, and the ability to make a great deal of it happen. Indeed it is not too much to say that without Acheson's clear vision of how American interests required a commitment to the defense and to the economic and social reinforcement of Western Europe, the postwar regeneration of Europe would not have occurred. What Brinkley has done, by focusing on the phase of Acheson's life when his native conservatism was most outspokenly revealed, is to highlight the reckless perversity of the charges laid against him by his enemies, and so to restore to him the reputation he does deserve, as the grandmaster of the anti-Communist grand alliance.

GODFREY HODGSON is the author most recently of *The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson, 1867-1950* (Knopf) and is writing a book about American conservatism between 1945 and 1980.

Alienated Labor

BY JUDITH WALZER LEAVITT

The American Way of Birth by Jessica Mitford

(Dutton, 322 pp., $23)

Many of us cannot attend a funeral or even read an obituary without recalling Jessica Mitford's graphic descriptions in *The American Way of Death* (1963) of the embalming process and her devastating transcriptions of funeral directors' smarmy words to grieving families. Her revelations about the elaborate public relations hoax perpetrated by the "Dismal Trade" on American families, designed to induce them to make their third-largest cash outlay (after a house and a car), shook the country and led to major reforms in the mortuary business. Ten years later Mitford delivered a similar shock to the American prison system with *Kind and Usual Punishment*, which helped to spur the prison reform movement of that time.

Now, in a book intended to remind us of her first major triumph, she turns her critical appraisal to childbirth practices in this country. But this time there is an important difference. Given the explosion of literature on childbirth in the last twenty years, this subject does not cry out for the muckraking, dramatic exposé that is Mitford's stock-in-trade. Much more apposite at this moment would have been a careful analysis of the wide array of work done by historians of medicine, childbirth educators, and scholars in the field of women's studies. Mitford does not seem familiar with much of the recent writing; she focuses on some of the important controversies surrounding the theory and the practice of childbirth, and makes some good points with her still acerbic pen, but in the end she doesn't exactly leave her reader ready to storm American delivery rooms.

Mitford became interested in the business of childbirth when the daughter of friends ran afoul of the law in California for practicing midwifery without a license. Investigating the particulars of that situation, Mitford visited with this midwife and her peers and developed "complete confidence" in them. She began to understand the limits on choices of birth attendant, location, and procedures that many women giving birth have felt and articulated in recent years. Then she learned about a woman physician, also in California, whose hospital privileges were revoked because her colleagues did not approve of her assisting at-home deliveries. It looked like a situation tailor-made for the Mitford treatment; and so she set out to expose such stories in an effort to improve the conditions under which women labor and deliver their babies.

Many of Mitford's arrows are directed at physicians. She bears them, as a class, little goodwill, though she does admit that there "is many a good apple in that barrel." Her negative view of the physicians who deliver the large majority of America's babies stems initially from a reading of history. Beginning with the

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medieval *Malleus Maleficarum*, the misogynist text that equated midwifery with witchery, Mitford catalogues the views and the activities of the "experimenters" who amassed "fame, acclaim, and fortune" through their interest in obstetrics: the various men in the Chamberlen family, whose secret forceps terrorized and saved women during the seventeenth century; Charles Meigs and James Young Simpson, who debated the virtues of anesthesia across the Atlantic Ocean in the nineteenth century; Ignaz Semmelweis, the Hungarian whose insistence on cleaning the hands in a time before infectious microorganisms were discovered reformed hospital practices across Europe; and J. Marion Sims, whose operations on slave women led him to ultimate success in suturing painful tears in the walls between the vagina and the bladder caused by childbirth, thus preventing lifelong debilitation. These men constitute the usual cast of characters called upon to illustrate the dual role that physicians have played in women's health: they have zealously furthered their careers, often at the expense of those upon whose bodies they worked, while sometimes also bringing real benefit at least to future generations.

In concentrating on male birth attendants, however, Mitford provides a somewhat distorted view of history and ignores the findings of scholarship. It is now commonly accepted among women's historians and medical historians that birthing women (or in a larger context, patients) played a genuinely significant role in making decisions about their own deliveries. They were not, as Mitford rather predictably refers to them, "voiceless sufferers caught in a net of obstetrical procedures." By taking away birthing women's voices in large sections of this book and failing to make them integral to her analysis, Mitford loses what could have been a potent weapon in her argument. The perspective that emerges is disappointingly conspiratorial and one-sided.

Women's voices are surprisingly muted in the discussion of the modern period as well. Mitford quotes from more interviews with men about how they experienced their wives' deliveries than she does from the women themselves, thus contributing in her own way to the silencing of women for which she blames physicians. In her discussion of natural childbirth experiences, for example, she quotes extensively from her friends Warren Hinckle III and John Kenneth Galbraith, but fails to mention how their spouses felt about giving birth. Only when she discusses cesarean sections does she interview women, to find out "how the whole procedure went for mothers who have been through it." Mitford's failure to seek, and thus to find, women's voices describing and analyzing the experience of childbirth leads her to conclude that only around 1980 did women exhibit a "newfound determination" to inform themselves about childbirth procedures. It is a conclusion that contradicts recent historians, who have found women to have been active participants throughout our history.

Mitford catalogues the medical procedures that define childbirth practices in American hospitals today, decrying in particular the cesarean section epidemic and the overreliance on ultrasound and fetal monitors. She describes hospital routines that too often incorporate forceps, although she recognizes a decrease in their use in recent years. Mitford acknowledges that much of the impetus toward overmedicalization stems from fears of medical malpractice, but she seems more inclined to put the blame on doctors, whom she portrays as insensitive birth attendants, unresponsive to their patients' needs. This disdain for physicians has a nasty edge to it. Mitford seems to need a villain, and grasps every opportunity to assign the role to the medical profession, accusing obstetricians of "wholesale abandonment" of birthing women because they fear being sued. Some of her examples sound like whiny complaining instead of social criticism; in such passages the muckraker threatens to become merely a curmudgeon who has lost her edge.

Still, Mitford finds her stride on two very important issues, one of which has significance well beyond childbirth. First, she provides a close look at midwives and their practices, and an analysis of how they can help us out of the current crisis over access to care. Second, she adds her voice to the chorus of those sounding the alarm about health insurance, and makes an impassioned plea for a larger governmental role in providing broad coverage for all our citizens.

Mitford's treatment of midwives will not provide scholars with any information they did not already have, and in this matter, too, many will be disappointed that she has not thoroughly consulted the available literature. But she raises important points, and does so effectively. Mitford has no desire to romanticize midwifery. In fact, she begins her discussion of midwives with an acerbic dismissal of their fetish about maternal-infant bonding during the first minutes after delivery. Calling the emphasis on such bonding "claptrap," Mitford points out its destructive side-effect: women unable to cuddle or to nurse their infants immediately after delivery feel inadequate and fearful for their children's futures. "Whatever is meant by 'bonding' (epoxy comes to mind), it seems obvious that those first allegedly precious moments have very little to do with the eventual relationship of mother and child," she writes. "True compatibility may take a lifetime."

Mitford usefully explores various venues for midwifery. There are certified nurse midwives, those nurse practitioners now licensed in every state who have undergone a clearly defined training program and who practice in birthing centers or hospitals under physicians' guidance. And there are also direct-entry midwives (or lay midwives), practitioners who may be trained as apprentices and who deliver babies in women's homes, but who are recognized in only a few states. California, for example, which provides much grist for Mitford's mill, does not have a law banning direct-entry midwives, but it also does not license them and does not allow non-licensed practitioners to deliver babies. Even those midwives licensed in other states who move to California find themselves caught in a never-never land. Lay midwives who continue to practice do so without legal pro-

Hibiscus Tea

The cup of tea in the dying man's room trembled
with each blow of the laborer's hammer.
Across the road, by the dusty trees,
they were splitting stone in fierce sunlight.
The shadows of the men clotting

with the shadows of the trees;
the stone to be hewn for an aqueduct
that would relieve future droughts;
the tea, red as blood, gradually
overflowing the cup and filling its saucer.

And the man, dead before the sun sank
behind the broken teeth of the mountains,
confessing no sins and tasting blood on his lips
when he parted them for the last time
to complain of a sudden, deep thirst.

NICHOLAS CHRISTOPHER

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Jerusalem

Whose city—whose "holy city" is it ?

It's twenty-five years, since Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, that the city of Jerusalem has been reunited under Israeli rule. But there is still much talk, and many people insist, that solution of the "Middle East Problem" will not be possible until Israeli Jews relinquish their "occupation" and restore the holy city—or, at the very minimum, its eastern part—to its "rightful owners", the Moslem Arabs.

What are the facts?

A city of many nationalities. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israeli Defense Forces reconquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Moslem holy city were rarely, if ever asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side by side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Moslem Arabs declared their willingness to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city back into Arab possession.

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city in the Six-Day War. It now has gained currency by dint of constant repetition. The basis for the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Moslems and Jews) with its two mosques. It is the place from which Mohammed is believed to have ascended to heaven. Mohammed never set foot in Jerusalem. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Moslem history did this mosque compare in significance to the Moslem holy cities of Mecca and Medina—cities that no " infidel" may visit.

A tenuous Moslem claim. It's on the basis of this religious tradition that the Moslems designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli Government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Moslem sensibilities, has largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Moslem control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Moslem tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and if the Moslem Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Moslem claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Moslem Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On the tenuous claim to the Temple Mount, they have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city". And it would be an insult to all Moslems and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews".

> "Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning, and of Jewish thinking for over 3000 years."

Jerusalem: never an Arab capital. But the city of Jerusalem—in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus—has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Moslem Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country since biblical times. It was the site of one Moslem holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Moslem Arabs until most recent history.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous. And the Moslem Arab claim to Jerusalem, based on the mosques on the Temple Mount, is just as untenable. Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning, and of Jewish thinking for over 3000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital.

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tection. Mitford follows the fate of a bill to address this problem recently introduced into the California legislature (and not yet voted on at the time of the publication of the book). Her arguments in favor of midwife practice are careful and compelling.

They are also based on firsthand observation. Mitford visited the midwife Ina May Gaskin, author of the popular *Spiritual Midwifery* (1975), at The Farm in Summertown, Tennessee, even though she had been put off by the "vernacular of Haight-Ashbury flower children" in Gaskin's book. The two women got along very well. "In real life," Mitford happily noted, "[Gaskin] is mercifully devoid of the sort of mushy malarkey that I found so disheartening." She was encouraged by Gaskin's cordial relationship with physicians in her community, and left The Farm optimistic about the possibilities of direct-entry midwives and physicians forming mutually beneficial partnerships.

Next, to see if the cooperation and success of The Farm could be replicated in an urban environment, Mitford visited the Childbearing Center of Morris Heights in the South Bronx. There a group of nurse midwives battled a skeptical medical profession and a Latina and African-American community itself not particularly welcoming, and within a year succeeded in building a flourishing birthing service. One contented birthing woman commented: "I knew from the moment when I walked in the door that I was home. The atmosphere—I was able to identify as an African-American woman; there wasn't anything like a hospital about it. You actually feel like you walked into your own home when you come in here."

These two examples, and the impressive safety statistics connected with the centers and with the practice of both nurse and direct-entry midwifery in this country, lead Mitford to the conclusion that midwives should become a more integral part of American birthing practices. She believes, with good reason, that the challenge of providing prenatal services to pregnant women, and of bringing quality birthing care to the millions of uninsured women who now avoid seeking any professional attention, can be met through a partnership of physicians and midwives. Mitford's ultimate goal, and it should be everyone's, is "informed freedom of choice" for all birthing women.

JUDITH WALZER LEAVITT, the author of *Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750-1950* (Oxford University Press), teaches history of medicine and women's studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

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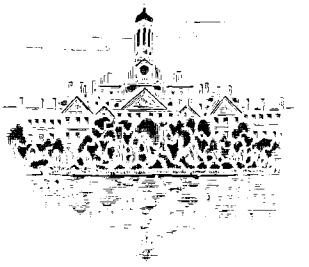
DUBLIN DIARIST

Blarney

"COLD AND STIFF, LIKE A FROZEN shot": that's Dublin slang for a cold person, which was what I was as I sat hunched in my coat in Trinity College's Old Library one evening last month. The temperature in the Long Room—which is indeed long, but even more impressively tall: a gothic church of books—is set for the comfort of leather and vellum, not flesh and blood. By day the Book of Kells basks in a central glass case and visitors marvel at it in the cool gloom. By night, for the first time that anybody I talked to could remember, people were huddled on folding chairs in bone-cold darkness to listen rather than look. The Book of Kells was gone, spirited away to some secret place until morning. Much plainer, newer books had become the attraction: nominees for the 1992 *Irish Times*–Aer Lingus Literature Prizes had arrived to read from their work. The authors at first seemed a little intimidated by the procession of white marble Great Thinkers who flanked the hall, and we listeners squirmed and sniffled throughout. But the rustlings in the vaulted hall were not the sounds of a dissatisfied crowd. We were just trying to keep warm.

AS I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND ON this rather incongruous occasion—a tribute to the imagination sponsored by an airline and a newspaper—Ireland knows how to respect and exploit literature at the same time. That may sound hypocritical, but the Irish make it seem like a completely wholesome combination. As President Mary Robinson said in her speech at the award ceremonies, the country has a "vested interest" in writers: they've been the most famous Irish export. To draw attention to their award, Aer Lingus and *The Irish Times* imported a few journalists, me among them, for a couple of days of celebration. I was wined and dined in Trinity Commons (slightly better than airline food), and whisked to the lively award ceremony at the Royal Dublin Society—and before I knew it, I had become just the zealous promoter my benefactors hoped for. This four-year-old, little-known book prize is very generous and, despite its source, not remotely middlebrow. Norman Rush, the author of *Mating*, won the international fiction prize this year (there are also two prizes given for Irish writing). That meant he took home £25,000, or roughly $42,000: it's probably the best award deal around for a work of fiction in the United States, Ireland, or the United Kingdom. The only possible drawback I could see is the clunky, commercial name, which lacks the ring of prestige. What a contrast to the perfectly christened Booker Prize in England! But I'm quite sure the problem hasn't occurred to the Irish. They'd laugh at my idea of giving the award a tony new title—the Trinity Prize, say. In a country that truly and daily celebrates language, there's refreshingly little sanctimony about serious literature. James Joyce himself plugged a cheap 1929 edition of the Anna Livia Plurabelle chapter of *Finnegans Wake* with this snatch of declassé doggerel on the cover: "Buy a book in brown paper/ From Faber and Faber/ To see Annie Liffey trip, tumble and caper."



I KEPT EAVESDROPPING ON ELOquence wherever I went. On Grafton Street, Dublin's traffic-free shopping mall, a man was camped out, ready to recite poetry from memory: he'd do your favorite selection for a modest donation. In Trinity Commons the mellifluous speech was in Latin: grace recited by a student, which was followed by the ritual pouring of the stout. Every student (and every visitor) gets a glass of Guinness every evening with dinner—thanks to, I was told, a bequest by the brewery to the college. The edifying purpose, presumably, is to stimulate lively discourse among the young, and it does. Tongues are similarly inspired in less hallowed settings. In a nearby pub, I watched as a man, stone drunk, lunged for a woman, and then, instead of slurring some incomprehensible come-on, declaimed with a lilt: "I have developed a great attraction to you."

I ALSO KEPT EAVESDROPPING ON praise for Mary Robinson, the first woman ever elected to Ireland's largely ceremonial presidency. During the reception after her speech, there was at least as much chat about her prose style as about the books that had just been honored. Robinson not only speaks well, but obviously reads, too. She invoked Beckett and Joyce, and she quoted some lines from a poem by Derek Mahon (who won the *Irish Times*–Aer Lingus Irish poetry prize). Amazingly, none of it sounded canned, and we Americans were awed. But so were the Irish: even they marvel when a politician writes her own speeches, to say nothing of when a political figurehead succeeds in conveying moral authority, as Robinson has ever since taking office. The adulation among this bookish crowd, though, was not simply high-minded. "Isn't she wonderful, and good-looking too?" gushed one of the judges of the prize, who had obviously developed a great attraction to her. "Even her hair looks real."

MARY ROBINSON, NOW 48, DID NOT always enjoy her current reputation for enlightened humanitarianism and womanly charisma. Before she became president she was best known, and sometimes criticized, for her outspoken feminism. And I gather she was considered a bit of a grind. As a hard-driving lawyer, she challenged Ireland's antediluvian laws on divorce, contraception, abortion, and homosexuality, and she was concerned with children's issues. After hours she was apparently not one for relaxing with her colleagues. According to one story I heard, she was willing to hit a pub with "the boys" after winning a case; but while they downed pint after pint, she wanted to debate. We may have won this time, she needled the guys, but what would have happened if the case had been tried under E.C. instead of Irish law? They rolled their eyes, doubtless wishing she were back home serving milk and cookies to her three kids.

INSTEAD TWO YEARS AGO SHE BEcame president, and her predicament is an instructive variation on the plight of our First Lady-elect, whose résumé is not so different. On the one hand, Robinson's role is even more circumscribed than Hillary Clinton's official wifely status: she, Robinson, is actually *forbidden* to speak (without government approval) on the issues she once championed. On the other hand, she acquired her political position fair and square: no one convinced her to hold her tongue during the tireless campaign that brought her victory against extraordinarily long odds. As a result, now that she's president people know where she stands, and her views, even though she can't utter them, have received a direct popular mandate. In fact, the enforced apolitical style makes her just the right, calm exemplar of the newly emerging Ireland, "open, tolerant, inclusive," as she once put it. Her noncombative presence allows—no, inspires—the conservative country to come to terms with the disorienting fact that it actually did go so far as to vote for her. Along with real hair, Robinson has something else extremely rare in politics: real symbolic power.

ANN HULBERT

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